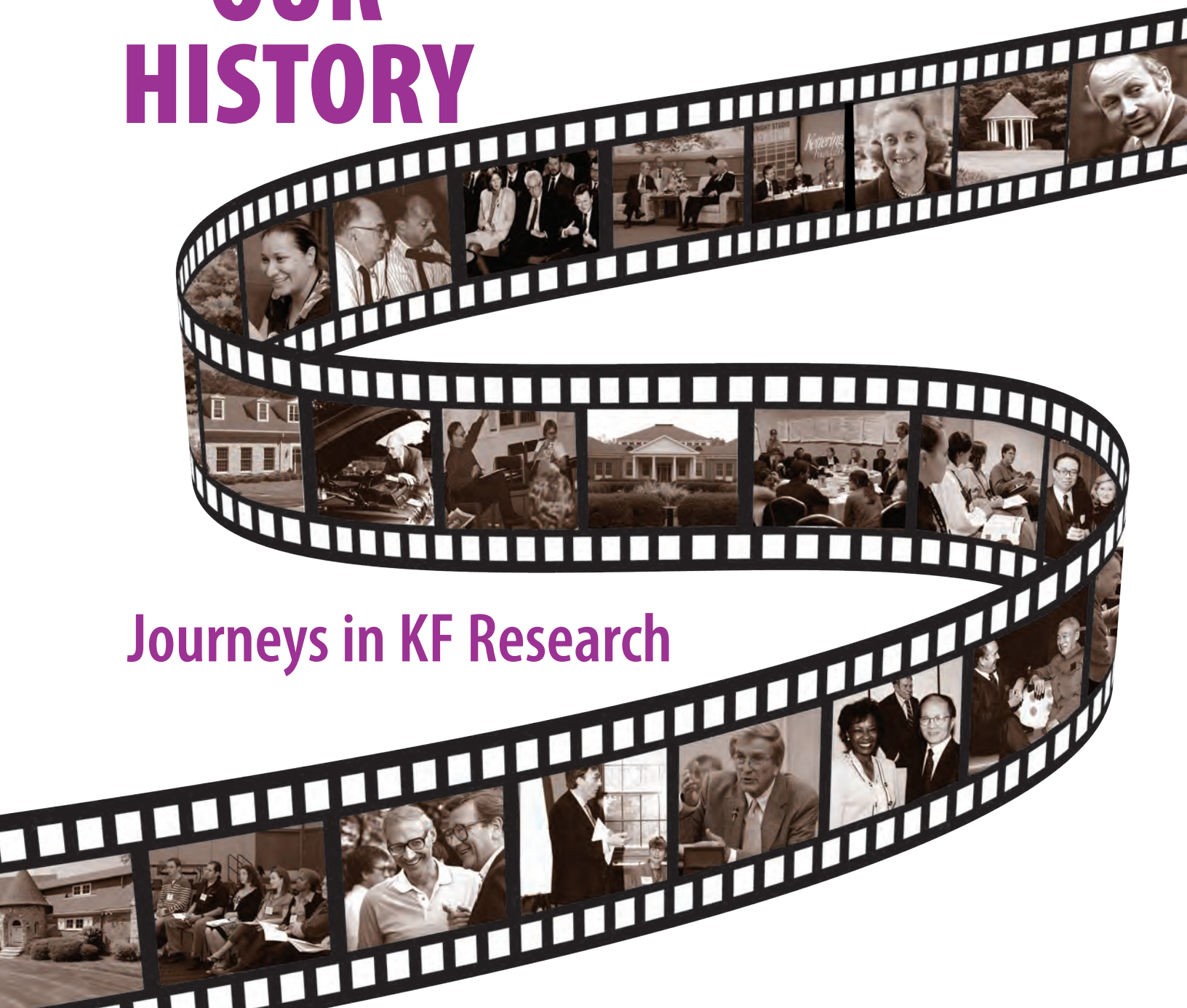


CONNECTIONS

2015

OUR HISTORY



Journeys in KF Research

The Ecology of Democracy

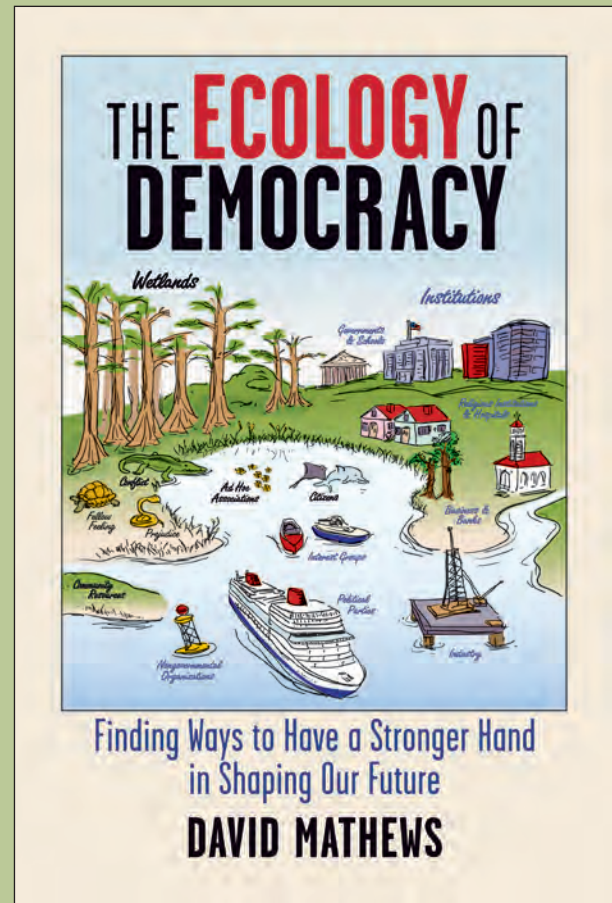
Finding Ways to Have a Stronger Hand in Shaping Our Future

by David Mathews

This book isn't about extraordinary people; it is about the extraordinary potential in the civic relationships they create.



Kettering Foundation Press | 2014
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Visit www.ecologyofdemocracy.org to download a free excerpt, talk to others who are using this book to jumpstart community conversations, exchange with educators and students who are using it in their classes, share your stories of citizen initiatives in the wetlands of democracy, and more!

The Kettering Foundation is a nonprofit operating foundation rooted in the American tradition of cooperative research. Kettering's primary research question is, what does it take to make democracy work as it should? Kettering's research is distinctive because it is conducted from the perspective of citizens and focuses on what people can do collectively to address problems affecting their lives, their communities, and their nation. The foundation seeks to identify and address the challenges to making democracy work as it should through interrelated program areas that focus on citizens, communities, and institutions. The foundation collaborates with an extensive network of community groups, professional associations, researchers, scholars, and citizens around the world. Established in 1927 by inventor Charles F. Kettering, the foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization that does not make grants but engages in joint research with others. For more information about KF research and publications, see the Kettering Foundation's website at www.kettering.org.

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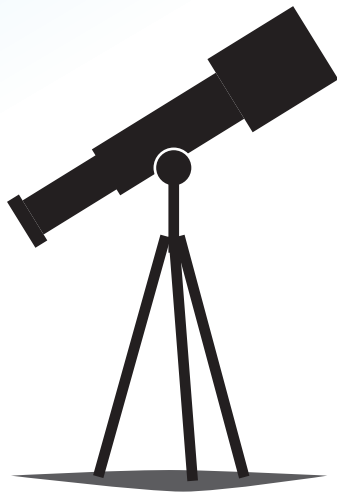
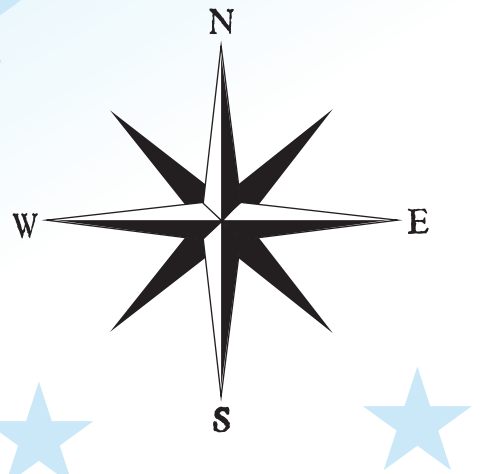
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How Kettering Discovered Democracy



David Mathews

Recently, the National Civic League asked why the Kettering Foundation has done so much research on putting the public back into public education. Our answer, in brief, was that our understanding of democracy demanded it. The objective of our research is to help democracy work as it should. Of course, there are any number of valid definitions of democracy, and the foundation has never claimed it has the only correct one. Kettering's definition is taken from the word itself. The *demos* refers to "the people," as those in a village, and the *cracy* is from *kratos*, which means "supreme power." Our understanding of democracy is that it is about citizens

having the power to shape their future. The education of the next generation is an obvious way of doing that. So the connection between democracy and education is inescapable. This is why our concept of democracy compels us to look at education and at the influence that people have on it.

How did *democracy* become so central to what the foundation does and how it does it? The answer isn't as obvious as it might seem; democracy didn't appear in the foundation's mission statement until 1996. Even though it was implied before then, it wasn't explicit. Yet the focus on democracy has come to dictate not only what Kettering investigates but also how it goes about its research. We realized that, to be consistent, the foundation has to behave in ways that are compatible with the kind of democracy it studies.

This year, we've become more aware of how our understanding came about by sharing memories of key events in the foundation's history, including the creation of Kettering's three publications, *Connections*, the *Kettering Review*, and the *Higher Education Exchange*. Over the past

10 months, Kettering board members, program officers, former program officers, associates, and others have engaged in something like tribal history making. The foundation knows from its research that the stories people tell each other about their communities' past can influence how the communities will behave going forward. Similarly, reflecting on Kettering's history has implications for the research the foundation will do in the future. And as this tribal history making has moved beyond the program officers to include the people in the organizations we work with, we have found that the storytelling has had the added benefit of strengthening ties to the numerous networks related to the foundation's research.

In this piece, I'll focus on what we are learning from the history of *Connections*, which was launched in 1987. Of Kettering's three annual periodicals, from the beginning, *Connections* has been addressed to the broadest audience. One objective has been to join readers in a two-way conversation with the foundation. We hoped they would not only relate to us but also to one another so

we all could share what we were doing and learning. Another objective was to show the connections between various Kettering research projects. We have long believed that the whole of our research is greater than the sum of the parts. And in the inaugural issue, I wrote that all of Kettering's research was "interrelated." But I didn't explain how. I couldn't. The projects were what a friendly critic called "a glorified collection of bits and pieces." In 1987, these ranged from citizen diplomacy to government problem solving to public policymaking in science and education. Nothing was said about what, if anything, was common to all of these.

Connections' history sheds light on how democracy became the unifying concept for all of our research. Initially, the foundation accepted the prevailing definition of democracy, which was, and still is, that democracy is representative government created by contested elections. From this perspective, citizens are an electorate or consumers of government services. They are acted upon more than actors. This understanding would change dramatically as we looked at what citizens were actually doing and at other concepts of democracy in the scholarly literature.

The citizens who came to have a profound effect on the foundation's understanding of democracy were visible in the first issue of *Connections*. Volume 1 showed a picture on the cover of Pat Henry reporting on what people had said in the National Issues Forums on Social Security reform. She was at the Ford Presidential Library with former Presidents Ford and Carter. But *she* was at the podium, and *they* were listening. Other articles were written by citizens or drew on the results of interviews with them. Mary McFarland, a teacher from St. Louis, wrote about an effort in social studies to emphasize the role of citizens as well as the function of governments. Shannon Reffett, supervisor of education at the Westville Correctional Center in Indiana, was interviewed about a project in prisons to teach inmates the skills needed to join in the work of citizens when they were

CONNECTIONS

VOL. 1, NO. 1 THE PUBLIC AND PUBLIC POLICY SPRING 1987

An Invitation to Connect with the Public's Work

by David Matthews

Welcome to this first issue of *Connections*, a publication of the Kettering Foundation. In the next several paragraphs I want to tell you about the work of the Foundation and our hopes for *Connections*.

You may know that Kettering is a research, not a grant-making, foundation. The research is basic; it is directed at the "problems behind the problems." Historically, Kettering has worked on problems in science, education, and government. In more detail, Kettering's work has been in international affairs and U.S. government problem solving, in the development of public policy, in the relationship of science and technology to policy, and in education. Kettering concentrates on a limited number of interrelated goals that have to do with:

- Crafting a program of nongovernmental diplomacy that can supplement what is done in official diplomacy;
- Developing problem-solving techniques for our own government and communities;
- Finding better ways for the public and the government to work together;
- Creating a better model for the public to use in learning the public's business, especially when the issues are scientific or technical;
- Developing techniques for generating the political energy needed for educational improvements, particularly in those communities at greatest risk; and
- Encouraging new forms of education for public leadership.

Kettering, the Foundation, began with Charles F. Kettering, the inventor, who devised better ways for mechanical systems to serve the public more efficiently. The invention of the automobile self-starter and the Delco generator for rural home electricity are prime examples. Those inventions required an understanding of the dynamics of engines in order to produce better ones. Analogies cannot be taken literally, but one way of understanding Kettering, the Foundation, is to think of it as still being responsible for developing "engines" that give us better ways for solving public problems. That work requires understanding the dynamics of political problems — knowing, as best we can, how things work in communities, in our country, even in the international order. Out of our history comes an obligation to master the logic of the problems on our agenda.

The scope of our work from local to international gives the impression of a great many very different activities. You will find reports in



this newsletter on programs ranging from Moscow to Beijing to Washington to St. Louis. All kinds of organizations will be mentioned: the Dartmouth Conference, the Domestic Policy Association, the Civic Arts Consortium. Despite this variety, these activities are testing grounds for what might be thought of as three types of problem-solving "engines."

One is a heavy-duty model for use when the issues, the parties, and the conflicts are reasonably well defined. That is the model used in supplemental diplomacy. It is used whether the particular problems are those unique to U.S.-Soviet relations or unique to U.S.-Chinese relations.

At the other end of the scale, a model has been developed for dealing with those public problems in which issues are difficult to pin down, choices have to be clarified, and citizens have to spend a great deal of time "working through" first opinions to reach shared judgments. That is the model used in the National Issues Forums for helping the public learn the public's business.

In between those two is a model that is used when the problem is that of transferring what the public sector produces to the government — as in the case of conveying the results of National Issues Forums to policymakers, or connecting what is done in the nongovernmental

"One of the responsibilities of *Connections* is to make interrelationships clearer and the transfer of insights easier."

Former Presidents Gerald R. Ford and Jimmy Carter listen to citizens at a Presidential Library Conference on The Public and Public Policy.

Dartmouth Conference with the deliberations of the governments.

The newer work at Kettering is in community problem solving. In one case the problems are in education, as in the project on the politics of education; in another they are social, as in the Youth-at-Risk project. But in both we are drawing from all three "engines" to develop a new model for community problem solving. Our work on the problems of making policy when scientific or technical considerations are paramount also draws from these same three "engines." And insights from these three on the nature of leadership inform the Kettering work on better ways to educate the next generation in its public responsibilities.

The point is that while diverse in application, our work is highly focused. It is also highly

continued on p. 4

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First issue of Connections, spring 1987

released. Cesar McDowell reported on an initiative to engage citizens in a comprehensive program of educational reform that went beyond schools. There was also a picture of a meeting of the Kettering board of directors; they were "looking outward" toward the citizenry by including Denver attorney Gail Klapper in their discussion on how people were working in communities to solve common problems. Wherever Kettering looked, it saw citizens, and they were more than voters; they were primary actors trying to shape their future with others.

As the first issue shows, one of the best opportunities the foundation had for seeing citizens doing the work of citizens came from an alliance between Kettering and the National Issues Forums. Over time, these forums would attract thousands of participants to their deliberations. Kettering used its research to prepare issue guides or briefing books for these forums. The issue guides emphasized the difficult trade-offs that have to be made on any political issue or community action project. This required people to do what was called "choice work" with others who often disagreed with them.

How Kettering Discovered Democracy

Over time, the citizenry that the foundation sees has expanded to include people working to put the public back into education, those engaged in building

works is through the work people do with other people. This work is more than paying taxes, obeying laws, and voting. Citizens are political actors joining forces to produce things that make life better for everyone.

I wish I could say that we recognized this immediately, but we didn't. It took time, plus the influence of what we learned from combing through the ancient and modern texts on democracy. We found authors from Pericles to Jefferson who put citizens at the center of democracy. And their ideas illuminated what the citizens we were seeing were telling us; they helped give meaning to what we were observing. Eventually, the combination of ideas and citizen observations reshaped our understanding of democracy. Without a conceptual context, the citizens we were seeing would have appeared to be just nice people. And without seeing everyday citizens decid-

ing and acting, the concepts may have been just abstracts without much practical meaning. We came to realize that democratic citizens are defined not just by their relationship to governments, but also by the work they do with one another. As Elinor Ostrom demonstrated in her Nobel Prize-winning research, this work is essen-

tial to the effectiveness of all of our representative institutions.

Seeing democracy as a system in which the people collectively generate the power to shape their future has given the foundation a unifying concept for all of its research. We began to look at everything from the perspective of citizens and the work they need to do in order for democracy to realize its full potential. What we learned by using this perspective has become a distinctive characteristic of the foundation's research. The litmus tests for Kettering have been (1) whether the research would respond to citizens who feel pushed to the political sidelines and aren't sure how to make a difference, (2) whether it would be useful to communities that can't solve their most wicked problems without the work only citizens could do, and (3) whether it would help institutions that are losing the confidence of citizens even as they struggle to reengage them.

This citizen-centered view of democracy pointed the way to a host of new studies and significantly shaped the way the foundation goes about its research, particularly the way the foundation relates to the networks that have developed around major areas of research. In fact, the foundation's understanding of democracy helped Kettering recognize the value of networks.

These networks include what is still the largest group, sponsors of NIF deliberations. But other networks—

The foundation knows from its research that the stories people tell each other about their communities' past can influence how the communities will behave going forward. Similarly, reflecting on Kettering's history has implications for the research the foundation will do in the future.

a greater capacity for civic action in their communities, and people trying to forge a more productive relationship with both governmental and nongovernmental organizations.

Kettering would come to recognize that the work that citizens do redefined democracy for us. The way democracy

Key Events in KF History from 1927 to 2015

June 24, 1927 – The Charles F. Kettering Foundation is incorporated as a not-for-profit organization. The purpose of the organization is stated as "the advancement of human knowledge and progress of science, art, and literature." Original board members are Charles F. Kettering, Lee Warren James, and George Smith.

1927

1928

How Kettering Discovered Democracy

actually networks of networks—now extend to civic organizations like the General Federation of Women’s Clubs, along with professional associations, such as those for librarians (American Library Association) and lawyers (American Bar Association). And while Kettering is focused on the United States, the networks are enriched by organizations in other countries, like those in the Arab Network for the Study of Democracy and the Citizens’ Accord Forum in Israel.

Drawing on these networks, *Connections* publishes stories that explain the nature of the work citizens do. So far, Kettering has discovered a half dozen or so practices or ways of working that give people more control over their future. Even something seemingly of little consequence, like the names that problems are given—and who gets to name them—proved to be crucial. Naming problems in terms of the things citizens consider valuable rather than just using expert or political terms has everything to do with whether people will become involved in civic work. As recent *Connections* articles have shown, naming problems in terms of what people hold dear turns an ordinary routine of identifying issues into a democratic practice.

In saying that Kettering’s understanding of democracy has guided the foundation to new research, I don’t want to give the impression that the foundation can unilaterally decide what to study. That might be true if the studies were only diagnostic;

but they aren’t. They are about solving problems, not just understanding them. So the foundation always has to find “fellow travelers,” organizations on the ground with a genuine interest in learning what the research might show them about their own work. The research has to be done collaboratively with them.

Democratic precepts dictate that it is better when studies are done *with* others, not just *on* them. For instance, because the way problems are named is crucial and citizens are turned off by technical or highly partisan descriptions, the foundation had to seek out those in the business of naming problems, such as journalists, to see whether any of them have an interest in collaborating. Would any news organization have a self-interest in research on more public-friendly names? Fortunately, we have found some of these journalists recently, and future *Connections* will include stories of what they are doing to rename problems in citizens’ terms.

We hope that the kind of collaborative research we are doing with journalists will also spark interest in other professions. That will create more connections in the networks. And it is the diversity of connections that is important to the research, not the size of the network.

For Kettering, the opportunities for collaboration are in networks of organizations that are interested in learning better ways to do their work. We all should learn from others, but no one can learn for someone else. In these networks, no one

is dependent on others for answers; the relationships are based on a shared struggle to know more in order to be able to do more. As such, no one is at the center of these networks, like a hub of a wheel with all of the spokes attached. Communications flow in such a way that anybody can reach anybody else as directly as possible; that is, without having to go through someone else. The foundation calls the meetings with these organizations “learning exchanges.” Kettering “trades” what it has learned from past exchanges for accounts of what the organizations are doing in their work with citizens.

The challenge for the foundation is to avoid the many mistakes that block the learning exchanges and destroy networks. Foundations are hierarchical institutions by nature, and they may need to be. They aren’t democracies; they are companies, which are some people, but not all, gathered for some purposes, but not all. The problem is that what makes organizations effective can be antithetical to the well-being of networks. Kettering has become what the literature calls a “hybrid organization,” an organization attached to networks that the foundation doesn’t own and can’t direct.

The question for future *Connections* is how to be an instrument for a hybrid organization. After all, the title, *Connections*, is just another name for networking.

David Mathews is the president of the Kettering Foundation. He can be reached at dmathews@kettering.org.

The Issue Guide and the Issue Forum: Political Inventions



A grant is made to build a science building on Antioch College's campus.

2015



2008



1993



2003

Brad Rourke

Many who have come to know Kettering over the years have been introduced to our work or know us primarily through the issue guides we develop for the National Issues Forums Institute. These guides are meant to support public deliberation on difficult public problems. Kettering coordinates their research and development, and NIFI publishes them for use throughout the NIF network and by others.

1930

1931

The Issue Guide and the Issue Forum: Political Inventions

Kettering sees these guides in two important ways. First, they are themselves research reports—accounts of the way citizens name and frame problems, as well as the options and tensions between the things held deeply valuable. Second, the guides are artifacts designed to support a political act: public deliberation. Public deliberation can both make clear and generate knowledge about the boundaries of political permission. Among all the things we *might* do to address our problems, what *should* we do? This is perhaps the fundamental political question about any wicked problem that society faces, and public deliberation is one way of beginning to answer it.

The NIF experiment was conceived as an effort to make public politics visible to policymakers. But once launched, it became clear that such deliberation can also be used (in fact is potentially more productively used) on a community level. Deliberation supported by NIF issue guides can generate an understanding of the “public voice” or a sense of the public judgment on an issue. And in a community, the same deliberation can generate collective, political responses to the wicked problems that only can be addressed through such means.

Origins

The origin story of NIF issue guides is the story of two figures meeting and creating something wholly understandable to each, but greater than what they might have done alone.

It was 1981, in a conference room of a New York grantmaking foundation. One of the figures was David Mathews, newly minted president of the Kettering Foundation. Mathews was a former president of the University of Alabama; he had also been the youngest cabinet secretary, helming the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare during the Ford administration. The other figure was Daniel Yankelovich, widely regarded as the dean of American public opinion research, and cofounder (with Cyrus Vance) of Public Agenda.

Kettering senior associate Robert J. Kingston worked in the Ford administration and for Public Agenda. He was part of this work from the beginning. In his 2012 book, *Voice and Judgment: The Practice of Public Politics*, he writes of the results of this meeting:

Even in the relatively mild, brief years of the Ford administration in the 1970s, David Mathews reports that . . . he had become more and more concerned about the obvious differences between what government set out to do and what citizens seemed to find important or useful. . . .

Yankelovich . . . revealed his concern about apparent contradictions in individual responses to serious problems in the polity, as recorded in public opinion polls. Simple questions invite simple answers,

but to complex topics, people react in complex ways. . . . To address what he called this “mushiness” in public opinion with respect to policy matters, . . . Yankelovich argued that people need to be presented with just a few—perhaps three or four—recognizable alternative approaches, explained in straightforward

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and accessible fashion. . . . A modicum of significant information, in similarly accessible fashion, with an acknowledgment of the drawbacks that arguably might attend each different approach for citizens under different circumstances, would also be necessary, in effect providing a simple public equivalent of the “decision memo” characteristically prepared for presidents and senior gov-

ernment officials faced with actually determining policy.

An underlying sense, however, at least at the Kettering Foundation and Public Agenda, was that this forum process would provide . . . a better handle on where the public was in relation to a given issue than did the over-worked and too often abused public opinion poll; and that “leadership,” advised by the “policy option” that a deliberative

At Kettering, we sometimes talk about issue guides and deliberative forums as a useful “self-starter.” They can spark the insight that we ourselves, singly and severally, are actors.

public had made its own choice, would presumably chart a politically and popularly viable course of action. Clearly, what we had in mind was the production of a documented insight into public concerns that would be helpful, even perhaps persuasive, when it was narrated to those in authority, leaders who had the power of decision and the authority to command action.

The connection between NIF and the world of policymakers is clear from

the outset. Issue guides and deliberative forums using them are seen as a way of bringing the public voice to the policy world. In this respect, the idea of a public “decision memo” makes sense—policy-makers need to know how the public sees the trade-offs with which they must wrestle.

Community of Actors

But the distinctive knowledge produced by deliberative forums is not just knowledge about how the public relates to certain issues. In deliberating, citizens do more than simply express opinions. They struggle with the issues and what we should do. A report on public deliberation thus is not just a report on what the public is thinking, like a survey or focus group analysis. Public deliberation *generates public knowledge*.

Citizens who deliberate together develop an understanding of how they themselves should collectively act on problems they face.

At Kettering, we sometimes talk about issue guides and deliberative forums as a useful “self-starter.” They can spark the insight that we ourselves, singly and severally, are actors. And once we have that insight in relation to one problem, we may then begin to see ourselves as actors in relation to a range of other problems.

Deliberating together, we may see ourselves acting in community, not just on our own.

And so the research purpose of NIF issue guides evolved: making a public voice visible to policymakers *and also* supporting community politics.

Program officer Randall Nielsen, writing for *Connections* in 2005, describes the latter strand this way:

The foundation has learned a great deal about the nature of deliberative forums. Public deliberation can be an essential part of the development of a *shared sense of direction* on an issue. What that means in terms of the practical nature of decisions has been difficult to pin down, in part because of variance in the nature of issues. However, we have learned more about how that shared recognition can result in the *political will* necessary to bring what often seems to be a cacophony of activities into more harmonious concert. It can also facilitate the identification of actions that might otherwise have gone unrecognized. This is a key element of what has come to be termed “public knowledge.” We can thus show that politics is not merely a matter of organizing or allocating existing resources; it can be a generative, creative force.

The practices of public deliberation are thus conceived not as an abstract normative ideal, but as a functional form of human interaction that makes dealing with political issues more effective. Public deliberation is not the end; it is a necessary means of making democracy work as it should.

Note that Kettering is not saying here that *NIF forums* are necessary to democ-

The Issue Guide and the Issue Forum: Political Inventions

racy, but that a *deliberating public* is. NIF forums are simply one place to see public deliberation—and to spark it.

Kettering continues to develop issue guides for NIF because of the rich areas of research such public deliberation continues to provide.

Things Held Valuable

The way issues typically get presented on a policy level are manifestly different from how citizens see those same issues. Citizens name issues differently, and these re-namings give rise to different options for action—re-framings. For example, citizens may not think about an “achievement gap” that professional educators must address, but may instead worry about why different kids seem to get different results for reasons that don’t seem fair. The latter formulation of the problem is one in which citizens may see themselves having a role. The options for addressing the problem will be different and are likely to contain much more that can be done on the level of community as opposed to institutionally. And so a barber may think to provide haircuts free of charge to children, if they will read aloud while he cuts. A community-level institution thus can be seen as one of the many actors that can productively be involved in the shared enterprise of educating local young people.

Kettering research increasingly shows that citizens see issues in terms of things that are deeply valuable to them and that wicked problems involve tensions



between these things. Evolution has wired humans to seek security, for instance, and has also wired them to seek freedom to act. The more of one that we pursue, the less we have of the other. An effective issue framework will make these tensions clear.

This way of framing issues is sometimes (often) at odds with the way these same issues are framed in policy discourse. It is disruptive. This can pose difficulties when it comes time to demonstrate the value of public deliberation to policymakers. Kettering is experimenting with various ways of doing this as a part of its A Public Voice initiatives, an experiment to see how we might productively involve policymakers in developing issue frameworks that are rooted in public research and conducive to public deliberation.

Another, newer experiment with issue guides is just beginning. NIF issue guides

are national in scope and, even though they are intended for use in communities, there can be problems getting community-based traction to hold forums. The facts on the ground or the potential actors may be slightly different. Or there may be other differences between how an issue looks locally and how it might look on a more national basis. We are beginning to experiment with changes in how we present issue guides to make them more easily “customizable” to local communities while at the same time maintaining the aspects that make them useful as self-starters.

If you are interested in such experiments, we look forward to hearing from you and possibly learning with you about ways to do this.

Brad Rourke is a program officer and executive editor of issue guides at the Kettering Foundation. He can be reached at brourke@kettering.org.

A Treasure Chest about to Open

In Kettering's archives, three decades of public thinking are nearly ready for discovery.

Nicholas A. Felts

Deep in the basement of the Kettering Foundation sits a treasure trove of information about the National Issues Forums (NIF). Just about everything anyone might want to know about NIF—from issue guides to starter tapes, forum recordings, and published reports—is housed in the Kettering archives.

NIF has been in existence for more than 30 years, making it one of the longest running experiments in citizen-to-citizen public deliberation. As a result, the sheer volume of NIF-related materials in the archives can seem overwhelming and unmanageable.

That was certainly the case when Michael Neblo (associate professor of political science at Ohio State University) and I first visited the Kettering archives in 2011. There was, to be sure, a sense of endless possibilities, but it was coupled with the daunting reality of box after box of materials.

The most numerous items in this sea of information are questionnaires. Tucked inside each NIF issue guide is a one-page questionnaire with questions for forum participants to answer privately before and after participating in a forum. For more than 30 years, forum convenors across the United States have administered these questionnaires and dutifully mailed them back to the Kettering Foundation. There are more than 100,000 of these questionnaires, on topics running the gamut from Social Security to gambling. They tell a fascinating story, not about public opinion, but about the much rarer public judgment that is the product of deliberation.

The issue that each questionnaire focuses on changes from year to year, and the questionnaires themselves have also evolved over time. The earliest NIF questionnaires contained around 40 closed-ended questions; they were shortened in subsequent years and now contain approximately 20 questions. Over time, open-ended questions, where participants are free to write as much or as little as they like, were introduced. The first open-ended questions asked citizens whether they had “changed their mind” on anything during the forum and whether they had a “message they would like to send to the nation’s leaders.” As the years went on, a greater number of open-ended questions were used and the questions changed. Today, NIF questionnaires ask citizens to describe how, if at all, they are “thinking differently” about an issue and “what citizens in their community might do” to address the issue at hand.

This change in questions reflects a realization that wholesale attitude change is neither the purpose nor the result of public deliberation. Rather, participants are usually “thinking differently” about an issue in the sense that they have wrestled with trade-

1937

1938

A Treasure Chest about to Open

offs and been exposed, through exchanges with fellow participants, to different ways of thinking about an issue. Changes in the wording of questions also reflect an emphasis on what citizens can do about a shared problem rather than what they would like elected officials to do.

One constant focus of the NIF questionnaires, though, is also one of their most uniquely valuable features. From the very beginning, each NIF questionnaire has always asked questions designed to capture which policy trade-offs citizens can and cannot accept. For example, a recent NIF questionnaire asked whether “Congress should raise the age of eligibility for Medicare to 67, EVEN IF that means seniors under 67 would have to get health insurance on their own or from an employer.”

Standard public opinion surveys do not usually ask questions that force citizens to reckon with the negative aspects of even their most preferred courses of action. NIF questionnaires have always done this and they are richer for it, because questions like this reveal what the public will do when push comes to shove. As someone who has both completed an NIF questionnaire and been in the room when others have done so, I know that participants usually note how difficult the questions are. In standard survey research, complaints about difficult questions are a glaring red flag and usually indicate that the wording of the question is unclear or confusing. However, in the NIF context, comments like this about the “even if” questions are a clear sign that participants are really thinking through an issue and grappling with all its complexities.

In a larger sense, the information that NIF questionnaires capture differs from that of standard surveys, even on the same topic. Standard surveys are generally administered to a randomly selected collection of individuals so the results will be representative of some larger population of interest. By contrast, those who complete NIF questionnaires are not randomly selected and, as a result, the opinions gathered from them are not necessarily representative of the larger population. For some, this

lack of representativeness is a cause to dismiss information garnered from NIF questionnaires. However, NIF questionnaires are unrepresentative in the best possible sense. While they cannot tell us how the population as a whole feels about an issue, NIF questionnaires *can* tell us a great deal about how a concerned and informed subset of the population feels about an issue *after deliberating with a group of their peers*. NIF participants complete questionnaires after having the chance to think about, read about, and deliberate together about an issue. In this sense, NIF questionnaires provide a picture of public thinking that is truly public and truly thoughtful.

The purpose of my original visit to the Kettering archives with Michael Neblo was to see what could be done to make all of this NIF information more easily and readily available. Prior to now, anyone interested in studying the National Issues Forums had to be physically present in Dayton to sift through box after box of materials. This could be done, but the daunting nature of the task deterred many a would-be researcher.

After several years of work and the help of an army of Ohio State University research assistants, we are now on the cusp of having a fully functional digital archive of all things NIF. This archive will contain data from the questionnaires described above, as well as copies of forum recordings, starter tapes, issue guides, and much more. What questions can we ask of this information to help us better understand how issues have been named and framed for public deliberation? Moreover, what can the stories revealed by the NIF questionnaires tell us about the nature of public judgment on the shared problems we all face?

Here at Kettering, we are excited at the prospect of further uncovering the stories that wait to be told by NIF questionnaires.

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The Kettering Foundation gives the first grant on cancer research.

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From Public Policy Institutes to Centers for Public Life:



Transforming People and Communities

Alice Diebel

Sometime around 2000, I went to a community-based training in National Issues Forums (NIF) sponsored by Jan Hartough at Michigan State University Cooperative Extension. I didn't really understand what NIF was at the time; I just wanted to learn how to work better in groups and to facilitate better

discussions. I never really put that training to use—never facilitated a forum in my community library or organization—but the idea of framing issues beyond the usual polarized positions remained with me. Some three years later, I decided to use a framework designed after NIF as the model for discussion materials in my own research to facilitate deliberation about a difficult hazardous waste clean-up.

Fast forward another two years, and I took a job at the Kettering Foundation. Little did I know when I got this basic grounding in NIF that it would carry me forward in such a profound way. I know I am not alone in that experience of transformative change through exposure to public deliberation. When I arrived at Kettering, David Mathews asked me to take on the NIF network as my responsibility.

1941

1942

Transforming People and Communities

In that work, I have met some of the most committed, talented, and bright people to partner with as scholars and researchers about Kettering's core research focus: what it takes "to make democracy to work as it should." The research shared by the network and the foundation has revealed some consistencies and some opportunities for change over time. This article will explore some of those changes.

In 1981, Kettering created the Domestic Policy Association (now known as NIF) as a means of briefing citizens on important policy issues of the day and encouraging them to weigh what was important as they formed their opinions about such policies. (Bob Kingston goes into greater detail in his 2012 book, *Voice and Judgment*.) The basis for NIF arose out of the thinking and partnership of David Mathews at Kettering and Daniel Yankelevich at Public Agenda.

Kettering was at the center of NIF then, making the development of deliberative politics its signature initiative. In partnership with Public Agenda, Kettering created the issue guides, taught people how to use them, collected the results to share with policymakers, and expanded the use of deliberative practices. The important lessons from the research in those early days were centered around the practice of encouraging public deliberation—weighing what is important in order to choose a direction in full consideration of what we might have to give up to get what really mattered. That kind of public deliberation,

in a public setting along with other people who may place different weight on what is valuable, was intended to encourage more thoughtful public choices.

As the numbers of people holding forums and using deliberative practices grew, the foundation took its initiatives off the Kettering grounds and held large meetings called Summer Public Policy Institutes (SPPIs) from 1985 to 1993. The kinds of things people in the network were doing grew and developed. People were learning to frame issues, write reports on what they heard in forums, and train others, further expanding the network.

Kettering's Focus Shifts

As time went on, Kettering shifted further and further away from training and practice toward research about practice as its operational focus. The foundation invited others to hold their own Public Policy Institutes (PPIs) in their locations so the network of moderators for NIF would continue to grow. Kettering no longer needed to conduct the training on practice; those in the network picked up that work. Kettering would refer people to these PPIs to learn about NIF, and the PPIs became the "clearinghouse" for NIF in a particular state or region.

Kettering kept some control over the development of the PPIs by limiting them

to one per state in those early days. At the same time, Kettering's research, which previously emphasized deliberative forums, was increasingly focused on all of politics, understanding the problems people face in communities and the impact of democratic practice on communities. Attempt-

The important lessons from the research in those early days were centered around the practice of encouraging public deliberation—weighing what is important in order to choose a direction in full consideration of what we might have to give up to get what really mattered.

ing to capture the process of arriving at judgment in the two-hour space of a forum was frustrating practitioners and participants alike. Participants in forums would often ask, "What now?" at the conclusion, looking for some collective thing to do. Thus, the approaches used by Kettering and by the network of moderators had to change to address such questions.

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Comparing Two Approaches to NIF

Public Policy Institute	Center for Public Life
Preparing moderators for NIF	Preparing community members to frame, convene, and moderate forums—taking part in all of politics
Using NIF issue guides	Adapting NIF issue guides for local use or framing issues locally
Serving as a convener of forums	Framing an issue in partnership with others to build a network of actors and change community practice
Holding forums open to everyone	Holding forums open to everyone, but cultivating participants through framing an issue of local concern
Sending questionnaires and moderator reports to Kettering for analysis	Developing analytic and reporting structures within community
PPIs enter a relationship with Kettering ad hoc	Centers join Kettering in joint learning as a cohort
PPIs learn from other PPIs	Kettering creates the environment for experiential learning
PPIs can have a single person at the center	At least two people must commit to the work to join a cohort
Started by an initial infusion of Kettering money	Started by an initial infusion of Kettering ideas
Participate in NIF research and programs	Share in Kettering research questions and design of experiments

Kettering began focusing its research away from what policy choices citizens were making to how deliberative forums might become part of the fabric of politics in a given place. The practitioners who were framing issues and holding forums in their own communities started doing research and sharing what they were learning with Kettering, finding out what happened before, during, and after forums, as well as how institutional actors related to citizens behaving like citizens or how they might strengthen such citizenship.

The number of PPIs continued to grow, but they were a disconnected group, receiving basic NIF instruction from other PPIs and joining Kettering for research-oriented workshops once or twice a year. Such workshops were informative but did not necessarily enlarge the vision of politics that Kettering itself was developing. Participants in these meetings often had questions about their struggles to change policies or influence policy-makers. Their work focused largely on the forum as the vehicle to create change or enlarge public thinking; the idea of change in democratic practice was simmering right below the surface.

Some of us at Kettering recognized the usefulness of the simmer. We recognized that, while the talk in forums was incredibly important in building deliberative habits and in helping people enlarge their understanding of public problems of all kinds, it was not shifting the politics

Transforming People and Communities

of a place so that public *life* could be more deliberative or democratic. We wanted to create a new approach to using NIF forums in communities.

A New Approach

In 2010, we called on four very experienced PPI directors to help us design a new approach to the PPI experience. We were going to work to understand deliberative politics, not just public policy. Martín Carcasson, Betty Knighton, Alberto Olivas, and David Procter joined me and my colleague, Kettering program officer Randy Nielsen, in creating a new design for a research-oriented exchange.

The idea of “research exchange” also reflected a shift for Kettering. Moving from the language of learning that occurs in workshops with a curriculum toward shared learning in exchange among mutually interested parties was a shift the foundation made that paralleled the change in our approach to PPIs. The research exchange creates the space to delve more deeply into the context of democratic, public deliberative politics and to learn along with new organizations beginning to use NIF to plan and design approaches to improve all of the politics and practices in the places in which they work. As a result, the design of the exchanges with new centers continues to change and develop along with the centers.

How could we learn more about the challenges of building more democratic communities?

As we did in the past, we returned to bringing organizations to Kettering all at once, but the design and intent was different. We knew we had to drop the PPI label. We started by calling them “centers for public life” in an effort to recognize their role in building democratic politics in the places they operate. No longer institutes solely about policy, they were hubs in a community intending to cultivate democracy and local control over the issues and concerns that people face every day.

We were particular about who we selected for these exchanges. In the past, we were content with one representative with a strong interest in deliberative forums, but we learned that this was problematic. What would happen if that individual moved on? Our interest shifted to identifying organizations with a lasting presence and commitment to shaping democratic communities. All new centers had to have at least two interested people and organizational support. We asked for a commitment to join in four learning exchanges held over time at the foundation and to doing work in between the face-to-face exchanges.

PPI commitments in the past focused primarily on holding forums. Commitments in the centers’ exchanges, however, focused on building relationships for

democratic practice and change. Creating an identity as a center with a clear mission is part of the work. Structuring deliberative frameworks and forums involving key publics meant they had to look beyond civic education or individual change and instead work toward addressing difficult problems in real settings.

Moving from the language of learning that occurs in workshops with a curriculum toward *shared* learning in exchange among mutually interested parties was a shift the foundation made that paralleled the change in our approach to PPIs.

The first centers for public life cohort started in February 2011, so the experiment with the concept of centers is still quite new. Many of the organizations are young enough that their impacts aren’t as apparent as those with a 20-year history. However, we have a few insights from this short period of time. These insights speak more to the relationship with Kettering in a “learning exchange” than to the direct

Kettering vice president and treasurer Brian Cobb; director of administrative services and program officer Mindy LaBreck; and facilities manager Terry Nichols have written a series of vignettes about Kettering's campus, which appear throughout this issue.

Nichols Point

This photo of the foundation campus was taken from Nichols Point. Named after Terry Nichols, who has served as the foundation's facilities manager for 29 years, the location provides a view of the entire campus. The building in the foreground is known as the Trustee House. Restoration on the house was finished in 2013 and it now provides the foundation with much-needed meeting space as well as a place for visiting scholars to live while they work among the foundation staff. The house was built in 1933 and has been a wonderful addition to the campus.



impacts they are having. (See the companion stories by longtime center director Joni Doherty, and a recent center director at Wabash University, Sara Drury.)

New Partners? No Problem

First, we were concerned that we would have difficulty finding organizations to partner with us: we offered no funding and no training—only the opportunity to join a network of joint learning. We have learned that finding such centers has not been challenging. More centers are interested in the concepts and ideas than we have space to manage. We don't know whether the size of the response is a result of a movement toward stronger, citizen-centered democracies, or if we are just better able to find partners.

Second, engaging centers as a cohort has built stronger networks among them. PPIs had a solid network to share materials and resources. However, sharing deep questions together about the challenges of changing democratic politics in their communities was less prevalent. Centers are learning from each other now in profound ways. More important, they are learning by creating experiences and reflecting on them with the group.

Involving centers in Kettering Foundation research in a variety of questions has built stronger relationships with Kettering as well as more focused research. For example, a number of the new centers work with students, preparing them to frame issues, facilitate deliberations, and work more democratically with com-

munity partners. One research outcome from a number of the centers has been a series of papers on “deliberative pedagogy.” This research, to be published by an academic press, has advanced Kettering’s understanding of civic education in the academy and will build new scholarship for the work.

While the shift has had these upsides, there are also some downsides. The commitment to NIF has diminished. Centers value NIF as a starting point, but they tend to focus much more on locally framed issues. However, these new centers may impact NIF in important ways, encouraging locally adaptable issue guides, experimenting with formats and design, committing to online forums, and focusing on policy briefings with selective legislators rather than large, public events that report on NIF.

The current approach with centers for public life appears to have jump-started the depth and speed of development among new organizations in the NIF network. While it may have taken early PPIs 10 years to grapple with issues of community impact and change that began with the *forum*, the current centers begin with the *politics*. Working to affect the politics might result in a forum that encourages citizens to recognize the things they hold valuable, their resources, and how they might organize to create changes they care about.

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At Franklin Pierce, Learning to Make a Difference

Joni Doherty

The New England Center for Civic Life at Franklin Pierce University is dedicated to the teaching, practice, and study of deliberative democracy. As director of the center, I helped align the center’s mission with that of the university. The center was founded in 1998 on the premise that engaged and deliberative communities are vital for a healthy democracy and for individuals to realize their goal of experiencing rich and fulfilling lives. Through initiatives that use deliberative democratic practices, the center creates opportunities for people to become active producers of knowledge and engaged community members. At first, our efforts were divided between community-based and campus-based work; today, about three-quarters of the center’s activities are on



campus. We learned that the best way to realize the center’s mission was to meet people where they are, and where we are too—on a rural, small, liberal arts college campus.

One challenge we faced was connecting the self-interested, personal goals of undergraduates, who understandably are preoccupied with doing well academically and preparing for their future professions, with the larger public good. We also faced the challenge of the workload of faculty, who teach four courses each semester. There is often little time for civic, cocurricular, or extracurricular activities.

We learned that if we were to engage these groups, we needed to become involved in their primary areas of concern. With that in mind, we began the work of integrating deliberative practices (includ-

The Kettering-Meyer Laboratory is completed at the Southern Research Institute in Birmingham, Alabama.

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At Franklin Pierce, Learning to Make a Difference



ing identifying issues on one's own terms, and on what is held valuable; considering possible actions; and making sound judgments through weighing benefits against trade-offs) into courses and the curriculum, not as "extras" or "supplements," but rather as activities essential for teaching and learning in a democratic society. These practices foster critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and good communication skills and are done within an environment that encourages collective learning.

Engagement through Community

These practices can foster deeper engagement through connecting course content with community life. Examples include having students participate in a deliberative forum on a community problem that is relevant to course content; creating an issue guide with various options for addressing a problem; ensuring diverse perspectives are represented in course assignments (readings, films,

and so on); and presenting ethical dilemmas in ways that invite the consideration of multiple options. Because deliberative pedagogy recognizes the impact of self-interest on engagement, affirms the value of personal experiences, and takes up "real-life" problems, it integrates formal education with the "subject matter of life-experience," which John Dewey has identified as an essential part of learning.

Our first major initiative was the Diversity and Community Project, which began in 1998. Faculty and students created guides on issues related to gender, sexual orientation, and race. We also used the National Issues Forums racial and ethnic tensions guide to situate our campus issue within a broader national context. We held annual moderator and issue-framing workshops, led class-based and campuswide forums, and began a Civic Scholars program. The project was integrated into the first-year seminar. A grant allowed us to share what we had learned with other colleges in northern New England. Over time, these activities became integral to all of the center's programming.

Another example of curricular integration, and one that connects courses across the disciplines, is the Art and Dialogue Project, which focused on a different issue for each of its five years. Our first project, in 2010, explored a water-related environmental issue. In following years, we took on other challenges, including respect (or lack thereof) in public life. This project

includes creating a public participatory art installation, which, along with concern-collecting sessions, is part of how we name and frame the issue, and convening forums. It culminates in a multimedia celebration that has included video, music, light and sound installations, and storytelling. This is not a programmatic sequence of individual performances, but one in which the public (in this case, students) are cocreators of a deliberative public exchange. It is a way for students to transform the everyday routines of college life into one in which they are the primary actors and agents for change.

As one of the university's primary community liaisons, the center also partners with towns and local residents on projects. Because they do not follow academic schedules, faculty and student involvement tends to be episodic, and having a full-time, year-round director ensures the necessary continuity. In "Rindge 2020: Mapping Our Future," town officials from Rindge, university faculty, and local residents framed the issue, wrote a guide, held forums, and implemented several actions. Another example, "Citizens Seeking Common Ground," involved residents in a school district that spanned two towns. The group held a series of dialogues to work out a way of addressing a six-year impasse on the need for new or improved school facilities.

Joni Doherty is a program officer at the Kettering Foundation. She can be reached at jdoherty@kettering.org.

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Town versus Gown? Not Here

One small Indiana college is making a difference in the local community.

Sara A. Mehlretter Drury

In January 2013, Wabash College started participating in research exchanges at Kettering with a cohort of centers for public life. Wabash College is a small, liberal arts institution with less than 1,000 students located in Crawfordsville, Indiana, a rural county of approximately 38,000 people. Our development over the last three years has been encouraging and energizing—both in the community and on campus. Wabash College is now the site for an interdisciplinary initiative, Wabash Democracy and Public Discourse (WDPD), and our work advances the kinds of communication that cultivate democracy—deliberation, dialogue, advocacy, and debate. The initiative has grown from a faculty-led process to a collaborative partnership with faculty, students, and community members.

We have worked with community partners to hold a number of public deliberation events. For our first project, we tackled a challenging but important issue: substance abuse. Recognizing the importance of community knowledge, we set up interviews to learn more about the concerns of local people, and at the same time, looked for state and national data to contextualize some of these local experiences. We also interviewed community leaders—a local counselor, the coordinator of the Prescription Drug Task Force, a probation officer, and an executive director of a nonprofit organization that works with youth in the community. We worked with our campus media director to create a video of these interviews for the event, which can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/Z1dfcMR5C0>.

More than 100 community members participated in the forums on substance abuse in November 2013. As they worked through three possible approaches to addressing substance abuse, we found that nearly every small-group table had at least one person who was personally affected by the problem. The conversation moved beyond typical positions and pushed our community toward finding innovative solutions. In a few follow-up meetings, participants reviewed and prioritized potential actions, but acknowledged the challenge of comprehensive changes. Still, we were encouraged to learn that several months later, a local organization working on substance abuse issues used the priorities identified in the forums as a starting point for developing a strategic plan.

An important part of this work has been involving undergraduate students from Wabash College. The transition from a faculty-led initiative began in spring 2014, when Wabash College began developing a strategic, interdisciplinary initiative that focused on equipping undergraduate students to stimulate productive conversations in communities to address problems—what would become WDPD. In WDPD, students work with partners on and off campus to facilitate deliberation, dialogue, and advocacy work. One of the most exciting benefits for our campus has been an increase in student-driven conversations on challenging issues. Students in WDPD work with faculty and staff

Kettering Foundation completes the Kettering Research Laboratory in Yellow Springs, Ohio. Research includes photosynthesis, physics, and biochemistry.

1955



across the college to develop discussion guides for courses and then facilitate forums on issues such as energy, climate change, and mental health.

WDPD also continues to work with our local community. Experienced students take leading roles in researching, planning, facilitating, and reporting on public deliberation events. In the spring of 2014, we turned to our local partners to find out what issues they felt needed public discussion. Crawfordsville mayor Todd Barton and the local economic development organization both suggested that community participation was needed to prioritize quality-of-life improvements in the county. We applied for and received a grant from Indiana Humanities to research and facilitate a

public conversation on "The Next Montgomery County: A Community Conversation on Quality of Place."

WDPD students held focus-group interviews to learn more about the local quality of place, and we worked collaboratively to design a process that allowed community members to authentically assess their quality of place—both strengths and areas for growth—and then prioritize the most important areas for growth. The student facilitators then led their group through a deliberation, which produced a strong public voice about the most important improvements and a growing sense of the community needing to all come together to address our quality of place. Three undergraduate students cowrote a report and presented

it to the public as a way of demonstrating accountability for the deliberative process, and the report was used in the city's application for the Indiana Stellar Communities Program. In August 2015, Crawfordsville was named a Stellar Community, a designation that will bring state funding for community improvements—many mentioned by citizens in the quality of place conversations.

Our experience as a young center has helped us to see the possibilities of working collaboratively in a small community. Community partners say WDPD's work is aiding innovation. For example, Mayor Barton commented that deliberation "moves well beyond the process of facilitating discussion that is merely problem based. It guides the discourse into the positive processes of consensus building and the creation of realistic solutions." Another community partner, Karen Branch of the Montgomery County Youth Service Bureau, expressed that the "truly collaborative" approach of deliberation and public problem solving has "increased awareness of issues and mobilized community efforts to help solve problems." Wabash College has established pathways toward more participatory problem solving and enhanced civic capacity on our campus and in our community.

Sara A. Mehlretter Drury is an assistant professor of rhetoric and the director of the Wabash Democracy and Public Discourse initiative at Wabash College. She can be reached at drury@wabash.edu.

Robert Chollar, a chemist and vice president of National Cash Register, joins the Kettering board.

1956

1957

Kettering's Evolving Understanding— and My Own:

Reflections on Three Decades of Involvement with Democracy and the Foundation that Studies What It Takes to Make It Work as It Should

Ray Minor

I have been involved in the Kettering Foundation's work since the 1980s—as a volunteer, associate, independent contractor, and employee—so I know that to understand the foundation's work, one must pay attention to the ways that it looks at the political world. That's not as simple as it sounds, because Kettering's unique understanding of politics has evolved over the past 30 years.

I learned over time that Kettering studies democracy from a citizen-centered perspective—the sense that

ordinary citizens desire to control their daily lives and that this desire defines what the foundation means by “democracy.” The foundation's primary research question—what does it take to make democracy work as it should?—derives from this idea and the underlying assumption that democracy is working as it should when citizens “self-rule.”

Democratizing Alabama

In the early 1980s, when I first became involved in this work, a broad network of individuals in Birmingham, Alabama, was convened by the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) Center for Urban Affairs and supported by the UAB Office of Student Affairs. This group was on the ground floor of what later became the National Issues Forums Institute (NIFI). The core group of individuals leading this effort included Odessa Woolfolk, Rebecca Falkenberg, Wanda Madison Minor, Peggy Sparks, and myself. Wanda Minor organized this group after several conversations with David Mathews in 1982. This group operated under the name

November 25, 1958
Charles F. Kettering,
founder of the Kettering
Foundation, dies at the
age of 82.

1958



Kettering's Evolving Understanding—and My Own



Birmingham National Issues Forums (BNIF) and annually convened a series of forums on national issues with hundreds of citizens and many organizations representing a cross-section of the community.

Later, after consulting with Renée Daugherty and Sue Williams of the Oklahoma Partnership for Public Deliberation about their research, I conducted a similar study to ascertain interest in developing civic capacity in Alabama. The study revealed broad support for such work, so in 2005, in association with Bob McKenzie and Joe Sumners, I coordinated and facilitated a series of forums statewide on the topic of rural prosperity. The findings were

released in a report, entitled *Listening to Rural Alabama*, at the Southern Governors Conference in Louisiana.

A Center Grows in Alabama

Still intrigued by the work of the Kettering Foundation, I worked with Bob McKenzie and Cathy Randall to found the Alabama Center for Civic Life, a 501(c)(3), nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, which was incorporated and received tax-exempt status in 2005. The center's purpose is to conduct research and training on citizenship, democracy, governance, and democratic practices. Since Mathews was the inspiration for establish-

ing the center, in 2008, it was renamed the David Mathews Center for Civic Life.

The center was established on the premise that democracy works best when enlightened citizens engage in the affairs of their towns, cities, states, and nations. A small group of Alabamians decided to fill a void in the public sector by establishing an organization that would equip citizens with the skills and knowledge necessary for engaging in public life.

As an autonomous entity, the center operates under the aegis of a board of directors, and its programs and activities are executed by a paid staff. The center has grown since 2005 from 3 founding

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Kettering's Evolving Understanding—and My Own

officers to a full board of 15 directors and a staff of 4. In 2014, the center held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for two new buildings in Montevallo, Alabama, at the American Village: a learning center with a rotunda and a two-story office building for the center's work. The center has carried out programs and activities in all 67 Alabama counties.

The influence of Kettering research can be seen throughout my work. My dissertation topic is a byproduct of the foundation's work: I applied Kettering's research on a citizen-centered democratic approach to the New Jersey Turnpike Authority and its attempt at citizen participation in toll policymaking. There I explored the level of citizen involvement and citizens' influence on a 11 billion dollar toll policy proposal in 2008.

Looking back, I have come to realize that Kettering's work is important for several reasons pertaining to strengthening democracy. Perhaps paramount among the others, Kettering's focus on the six democratic practices provides a lens through which citizens from all parts of the world can come to see themselves as key actors on public problems and see connections between their work as citizens and the work of people from widely differing circumstances. This recognition of the work of citizens by citizens themselves may well be Kettering's most important contribution to democratic life.

Ray Minor is a program officer at the Kettering Foundation. He can be reached at rminor@kettering.org.

Cousins House

The Cousins House was built in 1929 and in 1987 was named for Norman Cousins, a Kettering board member for 20 years.

The Cousins House was designed by Walter W. Tompert, the same architect who designed the Trustee House.

Shortly after acquiring the foundation's current campus in 1986, renovations began on the house. In 2001 and 2002, the wiring, plumbing, heating, and air conditioning were updated while keeping the original fit and finish. In 2008, the deck over the garage was replaced with a new meeting room/dining hall with fantastic views of the campus.



October 29-November 4, 1960

The first Dartmouth Conference plenary is held in Hanover, New Hampshire.

1961

Two Decades of Learning with Communities:



A Brief Look Back at the Community Politics Workshops

Phillip D. Lurie

The Kettering Foundation has a long history of research with people interested in a more democratic approach to the way that problems are solved in their communities. One such project was the Community Politics Workshop, a series that originated in 1994 as a result of the Kettering Foundation's practical research with Public Policy Institutes (PPIs). These PPIs, now known as "centers for public life," conveyed the value of deliberation, as well

as the keys for moderating deliberative forums in their communities. While the PPIs fulfilled the needs of people wanting to learn to moderate deliberative, public forums, we were being contacted by people who wanted to learn about deliberation but weren't particularly interested in organizing and moderating National Issues Forums.

Thus, at the 1994 summer Public Policy Workshop at Miami University, a separate table labeled "Community Politics" was set up for a dozen people

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..... 1963

Two Decades of Learning with Communities

who wanted help in understanding the principles of deliberation without the expectations of having to organize and moderate NIF forums. These workshops were not strictly held in the mold of teacher and student, nor were they limited to discussions solely about deliberation. They were, in a sense, their own set of seminars in which participants and facilitators (including foundation staff, associates, and experienced practitioners) would share ideas and experiences, so that both could learn about the ideas of public politics and what is needed for a community to solve its problems democratically.

Experiments in Learning

Indeed, these workshops were rooted in the joint learning of both the Kettering Foundation and the Community Politics teams. The central challenge for Kettering was how to experiment with ways to make that transition in a workshop series—one that does not lead people into the sense that they come to be taught well-defined tools that can somehow guarantee their communities will work better, but rather to develop insights that hold the promise of helping to create the foundation for a different way of doing things, the details of which they have to imagine and try out themselves. Watching these groups imagining and trying things out, we could learn more about the ideas themselves—about how to name problems in ways that people will recognize them, and about how the insights of

deliberative politics can be put into practice in various places. The foundation and community teams are learning together and, in so doing, having an impact on the character of political practice in a community.

Given this challenge of joint learning, it became apparent that there were too many ideas and no time to connect these ideas with the work of participants back home. Thus, the format of the workshops was changed. Initially, the workshops were one-time sessions, then a series of two or three workshops over a one-year period, and finally a series of six workshops over a two-year period.

The results of the changes in format were twofold: First, participants were able to spend more time learning the ideas of community politics and thinking about what those ideas meant in the context of their own community. There was time for discussion of these ideas rather than simply naming and defining the key terms. Second, participants agreed to take what they'd learned during the sessions and apply it to work back home. Having teams try these ideas out in their communities improved the quality of Kettering's research because we were able to learn from their firsthand experiences. This brought out a "realness" in our research that lecture-type workshops—

workshops based solely on teaching—failed to capture.

The Community Politics Workshop series had dual goals:

1. learning what it takes for a community team to create the opportunity and space for the practice of public politics on an ongoing basis, and
2. learning what it takes for the community teams to be able to share that understanding and skill with others in their community.

**The Kettering Foundation
has a long history of research
with people interested in
a more democratic approach
to the way that problems are
solved in their communities.**

In the 1998-2000 workshop series, for example, the bulk of time and attention was devoted to accomplishing the first goal, and the teams all made remarkable progress in bringing the process of public deliberation to their communities. In the following workshop series in 2000-2002, more attention was given to the second goal, and we sought more explicitly to equip the community teams to teach the

Pollster George
Gallup joins the
Kettering board.

1964

Two Decades of Learning with Communities

elements of community politics to others in their communities.

After the switch to the two-year cycle of Community Politics Workshops, teams came from the following communities:

- 1998-2000: Summit County, Ohio; Owensboro, Kentucky; and Kanawha County, West Virginia.
- 2000-2002: Allendale County, South Carolina; East St. Louis, Illinois; and Helena, Arkansas.
- 2002-2004: Stillwater, Oklahoma; Campbellsville, Kentucky; and Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

These teams consisted of people in both the private and public sectors. In fact, the foundation was quite thoughtful about the question of what makes for a successful Community Politics team. While we had no definitive answer as to the making of a truly successful team, we did identify several characteristics of teams that contributed to success, including (1) capable and dedicated team leaders; (2) team members with time, interest, and a sense of responsibility; and (3) teams based in communities that have some degree of social fabric or civic life. Examples of participants include a newspaper publisher, social agency staff, a bank vice president, a chamber of commerce director, school officials and staff, a hospital president, a United Way director, and staff from nonprofit institutions. Prior experience with these ideas was not a prerequisite.



Community Politics Workshop, 2000

When Communities Work Together

After more than a decade working with community-based teams, it is difficult to capture what we have learned in a few scant paragraphs. Moreover, these efforts have been one part of a larger research initiative, situated within KF's Community Politics and Leadership program area, so the outcomes reflect the aggregation of data from all of these related efforts. Nonetheless, over the years, we've learned quite a bit about how communities work together democratically to address the problems they face.

- **Community teams grew in their understanding of the goals and potential of deliberative practices.**

As people began to engage in the practices of community politics, they tended to express their goals as either striving toward changing the political culture or making progress on a serious problem. This could be simplistically summarized as those who wanted to convene forums and change decision-making processes versus those who wanted action. However, over time, the thinking of most participants evolved to understand that both goals are intertwined. None believed

The Institute for Development of Educational Activities (I/D/E/A/), a program that focuses on the problems with elementary and secondary education, is established.

1965

1966

Two Decades of Learning with Communities

deliberation was an end in itself, but they took differing views of the role of the convening organization in fostering action. Overall, we have learned that motivated citizen groups can understand the potential of public politics in their community.

- **Deliberative practices, as conveyed to these community groups, were labor and time intensive.**

One readily apparent problem faced by most teams, especially those that rely heavily on people who volunteer outside of their jobs, is that deliberative practices, at least as shared in the workshops, have been labor and time intensive. In many cases, team members report decreasing their activity because of other demands on their time. Finding ways to allow the public to do its work in ways that are less burdensome and more natural would allow teams, especially those without paid staff, to sustain the democratic practices over time.

- **Community teams could frame issues and hold forums but had difficulty making an impact.**

Overall, the community teams participating in these workshops could, with varying degrees of success, name, frame, convene deliberative dialogues, network, evaluate their efforts and progress, and, if desired, play a role in fostering citizen action. As a result, most community teams could claim some positive impacts as a result of their work. However, despite years of thoughtful effort, the Community Politics teams acknowledge that, at best,

their work resulted in small pockets of change. At worst, some reflect that their efforts (despite being well thought out and labor intensive) had virtually no lasting impact on politics-as-usual or the community as a whole. Confronted with the limitations of largely volunteer teams and the realities of politics-as-usual in their communities, all of the community teams have struggled. Progress, if any, toward embedding and sustaining deliberative practices in the community in any way that really makes a difference or making a dent in serious problems has been uneven at best.

- **Community teams often operated in a “parallel universe,” disconnected from politics-as-usual, or faced resistance when confronting politics-as-usual.**

Community Politics teams had difficulty developing democratic practices that complement institutional practices. Oftentimes, community institutions used deliberative forums as a means to get input from citizens to justify existing proposals or satisfy a public participation requirement. Sometimes teams faced outright resistance from local institutions, which were hesitant to change. Team members often found that they were not able to bring enough local decision makers or funders to appreciate the need for deliberative public decision making, despite the best efforts of their team and their partner organizations.

While the workshop series ended to allow for an internal review of our learning,

the research has continued on in other ways. We are still experimenting today with how people in communities solve problems together. The foundation researches the ways that distinct groups attempt to constructively affect the politics of naming and framing problems in their community—as well as how they collectively address them. That is, how do innovations, which are designed to change the nature of the workings of political interactions in a community, work?

Learning exchanges are built around experiments and the practical implications of carrying out innovations. We are interested in learning more about:

1. how innovations can be initiated;
2. the potential barriers to trying new ways of solving problems together in communities;
3. assuming that innovations occur, the political outcomes of the innovations in practice, which includes changes in interactions regarding particular problems; and
4. the development of self-consciousness among citizens of key democratic practices and ways to make them citizen-driven.

We are studying how political entrepreneurship can be done with democratic intent.

Phillip Lurie is a program officer at the Kettering Foundation. For more information on the Community Politics Workshop series, or for any questions or comments, he can be reached at plurie@kettering.org.

1967

The Kettering Foundation moves its main office from 42 N. Main Street in downtown Dayton to the Financial South Building on Far Hills Avenue.

Norman Cousins, editor of the *Saturday Review*, joins the Kettering board.

November 1967
Richard Lombard becomes KF president.

Public Education as Community Work

Connie Crockett, Phillip D. Lurie, and Randall Nielsen

The foundation's interest in public education begins, as all of its research does, with the responsibilities of citizens in democracy. As citizens, people need to be willing and able to shape the futures of their communities. That requires the ability to shape the education of their communities' youth. What enables people and community organizations to recognize their ability to educate and to put their resources to use? What opens schools to the complementary production of education in the community?

Program officers Connie Crockett, Phil Lurie, and Randall Nielsen recently shared their recollections of the history of Kettering research into the education of youth. What

were the critical problems and insights along the way?

Phil Lurie: Today, it is widely recognized that people are frustrated by the lack of influence they have on the public schools. However, there seems to be little recognition of the potential that exists in the resources outside of schools that could reinforce the work of schooling.

Randall Nielsen: That is what makes the study of the politics of education such a vital part of the foundation's overarching study of how to make democracy work as it should. The challenges that people face in bringing their collective resources to complementary work in the education of youth are fundamental problems of democracy.

PL: In public policy, and in studies of education, the challenge remains quite narrowly defined. Generally the problem is seen as understanding how people can be more influential in the administration of schools.

Connie Crockett: And how to get people to *support* the schools, somewhat without question. It is interesting to recall that the foundation's alternative emphasis on the whole picture of an educating ecology emerged pretty early on at Kettering.

The History of the Study of Education at Kettering

RN: Education has been a fundamental interest for the Kettering Foundation since its inception in 1927. For Charles F. Kettering, the interest was driven by a practical recognition of a relationship between democracy and a culture of widespread inventiveness, which he saw as the key to long-run prosperity. He saw inventiveness as "nothing but a state of mind—a friendly, welcoming attitude toward change." To be open to change is to be open to learning.

CC: Change is unsettling, but it is a fact of life. Kettering chose to take on some of the toughest problems in engineering. I wonder if he realized that the attitudes people have toward openness to the unfamiliar is a political problem?

RN: Recall that in the 1920s authoritarian regimes were on the rise around the world. Kettering saw this as a result of

The foundation relinquishes most of its conventional grant-giving functions and instead begins to focus on the development of new enterprises charged with examining the compelling needs of society.

1968

1969

Public Education as Community Work

political inability to deal constructively with the social and cultural pressures caused by the Industrial Revolution. Democratic society required people to be innovative and adaptive to the changes that resulted from innovation. Both of those capacities would require forms of education that developed and sustained a culture of learning.

CC: So, from the beginning, the foundation's research was designed as an exploration of three interrelated areas: science and technology, education, and political governance. The fundamental question that linked the three areas of research was how the citizenry could govern, with a "friendly welcoming attitude toward change."

PL: In a quite different way, change has become the de facto mode of operation in school administration, what with the constant efforts aimed at reform. However, it's been inventiveness and change for change's sake.

RN: Based on his own experiences, Kettering felt that the conventional protocols of schooling reinforced the natural human tendency to be discouraged when trying something new. In school, Kettering said, "if we failed once, we were out. In contrast, all research work is 99.9 percent failure and if you succeed once you are *in*." To progress in any worthwhile initiative, "we must learn to fail intelligently so that we won't become discouraged at 99.9 percent failure." He was keen to dis-



In my opinion, an ounce of experimentation is worth a pound of untried theory."

CHARLES F. KETTERING

cover ways that the protocols of schooling could be aligned with the idea of learning through "failing successfully."

CC: To that challenge, Kettering was involved in inaugurating cooperative education at the University of Cincinnati in 1906. He helped to establish the cooperative plan at Antioch College, at the General Motors Institute, and at the Northwestern Institute of Technology. He was also active on behalf of the cooperative plan at the

Thomas Alva Edison Foundation, of which he was president. Early Kettering efforts were mindful of this way of learning in explorations that integrated classroom teaching with practical experiences outside of the school environment.

PL: The key point is that the underlying recognition—that education includes more than schooling and technical training—was always a fundamental premise of the Kettering Foundation's research.

June 1969

The foundation sponsors the Kettering Conference on Public Television, which brings together 65 people from all aspects of public television. The foundation's interest lies in the broad issue of mass communication programming.

The foundation funds the United Nations Association World Youth Assembly and the Adlai Stevenson Institute of International Affairs, expanding its International Affairs programming.

/I/D/E/A/ develops Individually Guided Education (IGE) in 125 schools, with more than 60,000 students involved in the program.

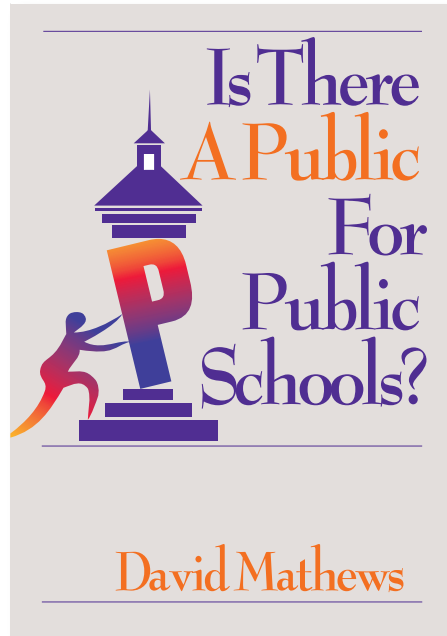
1970

The Focus on Community

RN: Those early studies of cooperative education focused on experiments in higher education. But the general insight that education is more than schooling resonated with the work of other thinkers, like John Dewey and Kettering board member Lawrence Cremin, who were studying public schooling and the education of youth from a democratic perspective. As time went on, the foundation expanded its scope to explore the roles and functions of public schools in municipalities around the country. In 1984, findings from a series of studies were reported in what became a classic book, John Goodlad's *A Place Called Schools*.

PL: It seems that the notion that schools function within, and are a product of, their communities (or municipalities) was increasingly recognized in the early 1980s. The *A Nation at Risk* report, however, led to an increased emphasis on reforms singularly focused on the administration of schooling. And Kettering was active in that conversation. The foundation's Institute for Development of Educational Activities (I/D/E/A) became widely known for the innovations it produced in the administration of schooling.

CC: In the mid-1980s, the foundation began a series of studies that explored a different perspective: the nature of the relationships around education in communities across the United States. The



research did not study schooling. Instead it was focused on people who were not professionally employed by school districts. How do citizens understand their roles in the challenge of educating young people, how do they understand their communities, and how do they see the public schools in that context? What would it take for people to see schools as assets of their community?

RN: In 1996, the foundation published an interim report on that research in the book, *Is There a Public for Public Schools?* by David Mathews. The key insight was that the widely documented frustrations about schools could be seen as a symptom of larger phenomena. People increasingly sensed that the basic chal-

lenges that defined their lives, including the education of their children, were out of their control. It wasn't about schools alone. It was about the need to see ways that they could do things, together with others in the places where they lived, that mattered.

CC: In that context, the growing tendency to focus on the schools as the singular means of education was tragically misguided. People were searching for ways to be more constructive actors in education and to have the work they did recognized. Instead they were getting more and more data on what schools were doing.

The Perspective of Professionals

PL: Community-based groups that we worked with recognized this early on, and most ended up working on education-related issues. But most public policy analysts and schools of education never picked up on this distinction. Instead they focused on ways to provide parents—seen as consumers—with more informed choice in schooling.

CC: Right. The problem was that people increasingly felt disconnected from each other in the shared challenges of education of youth. But the response from the education professionals was to work on their own public engagement practices, which focused on how to better engage people in things the schools do. That meant that the public engagement “movement” didn't affect the fundamental challenge, which is how citizens can

January 1, 1971

Robert Chollar assumes the presidency of the foundation. He is the first to serve full-time in this position.

The foundation begins a new line of research on Citizen Involvement.

1971

Public Education as Community Work

reclaim their role in public education as part of the larger challenge of improving the way they work with one another in their communities.

PL: Moreover, while we saw a fundamental change in the education reform movement with the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, which shifted the focus from educational inputs to educational outcomes, the underlying emphasis remained on professionals and institutions, leaving little if no role for citizens as actors.

RN: Yes, the accountability movement has been a fascinating example of the practical impact of the failure to recognize education as the work of communities of people. As people were encouraged to see themselves as consumers rather than co-producers of education, political support for ways to hold school professionals accountable naturally grew. But in the early 2000s, we did a series of studies showing how quickly that could change. We found that when people carefully considered the challenges of education in the context of their communities, they would rename the challenge in ways that implicated themselves and others as actors. It happened naturally. And as it happened, accountability necessarily became renamed as well. The key then is how to encourage that renaming—that reinvention—of the challenge of education.

CC: Again, the challenge begins with seeing it as a problem of democracy, not

a problem of administration of schooling. The public in Mathews' 1996 book referred not simply to people living in a particular place, but rather to a diverse body of people willing and able to recognize and act on shared concerns. In so doing, they become a responsible public, in which people hold one another accountable to a covenant that has been legitimately decided upon. Our focus on democracy suggests that citizens need to engage one another in the fundamental challenge of choosing "how do we want to educate our youth?" This is where we remain, and we are still looking for innovators and experimenters.

The Current Focus

RN: The foundation's studies remain focused on the implications of a simple premise. Young people are educated through experiences that occur inside and outside of schools. The educational capacity of a community is defined by the ability to put the mélange of educational resources to work in complementary ways. We explore the governance of educational resources as a fundamental challenge of democratic citizenship.

PL: The problem is that education remains widely seen as the singular responsibility of schools and professionals. Critical roles citizens play and need to play go unrecognized by professionals and non-professionals. As *education* has become *schooling*, the non-school educational assets in communities have largely disap-

peared from the naming and framing of public choices about issues that affect the education of youth. Thus professional educators have detached the governance of schools from the governance of the myriad non-school activities that critically affect educational outcomes. Non-school activities remain as an educational force, but they are not often the subject of citizen-to-citizen judgment and innovation.

RN: The resulting atrophy of *educational citizenship*—the shared sense that communities of people have the responsibility and power to shape the education of their youth—weakens educational outcomes and reduces public confidence in school institutions. It also weakens the popular sense of the democratic capacity to shape the futures of children. That is a fundamental threat to democracy itself.

PL: The research is now organized into two complementary areas, both studying innovations in practice. One focuses on showing the potential for the education that occurs outside of schools. The other explores way that people can bring the governance of public schooling into the larger context of the governance of all educational resources.

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The Kettering Research Lab
begins new research on
improving water quality.

..... 1972

Listening for, and Finding, a Public Voice

Bob Daley

Dick Cheney got our attention immediately.

It was February 1983, during the first in a series of Presidential Library conferences on the public and public policy. This one was held at the Gerald Ford Library in Ann Arbor, Michigan. It was the culminating event of the initial year of the Domestic Policy Association (DPA), which later became the National Issues Forums (NIF).

This landmark meeting was the national rollout of deliberative democracy designed in collaboration between David Mathews, president of the Kettering Foundation, and Daniel Yankelovich, president of Public Agenda.

Patricia Henry, a community and business leader from Lawton, Oklahoma, who had participated in forums, and Cheney—then a Wyoming congressman—were airing their mutual frustrations. (Earlier, Cheney had been White House Chief of Staff during the Ford administration and later served as Secretary of Defense and Vice President of the United States of America.)

Citizens' Complaint, Officials' Dilemma

Henry voiced a complaint commonly heard from citizens, that public officials don't seem to listen to them. Cheney

expressed the dilemma of a public official who receives more mail than anyone could be expected to read. Worst of all, he said, was the assumption that the public really knows what the answers are and that if political leaders only listened more closely, they would avoid making so many "dumb decisions."

The question was: If the public doesn't offer infallible wisdom for policymakers, what does it offer? The exchange between Henry and Cheney marked the beginning of the foundation's inquiry into a public voice—not, mind you, *the* public voice, but *a* public voice—that continues today.

In his 2012 book, *Voice and Judgment: The Practice of Public Politics*, Kettering Foundation senior associate Bob Kingston said researchers wanted "to learn more clearly how the public might find and exert its will in shaping its communities and directing its nation (which sometimes seems, paradoxically, more oligarchy than democracy)."

The research plan included a series of deliberative forums held throughout the country on urgent national issues followed by reporting outcomes to policymakers.

Former presidents Ford and Carter cochaired the 1983 Ann Arbor meeting, where citizens first reported forum outcomes to policymakers. Forum participants had agreed that an important part of the process was to convey to national leaders a sense of what took place in the local forums.

Study of Schooling project begins.
This project is a joint effort with
/I/D/E/A/ and the foundation's
International Affairs program.

1973

1974



Simultaneously, a series of annual meetings organized by Kettering and called Washington Week, began. Forum participants reported to officials of the executive branch at the White House before going to Capitol Hill to confer with congressional staff. Kingston wrote in *Voice and Judgment* that library conferences, attended by noticeable alumni of the White House and federal agencies, were not trapped in congressional politics. Washington Week meetings with congressional and executive branch staff, he wrote, “proved more rewarding than have presentations closely tied to highly politicized legislative issues and made directly

to congressional and executive branch leaders.”

To celebrate the bicentennial of the US Constitution in 1988, Presidential Library conferences were combined with Washington Week. Called National Forums '88, the event became a four-day joint effort of DPA, the National Archives and Records Administration, the Office of Presidential Libraries, and the Kettering Foundation.

Experiments Take Shape

Six separate programs were designed to experiment with a new type of reporting to policymakers. Three of the

programs were National Issues Forums roundtables, in which citizen representatives from local forums met with policy experts and influencers to discuss the 1987-1988 issues: “The Superpowers: Nuclear Weapons and National Security,” “The Trade Gap: Regaining the Competitive Edge,” and “Freedom of Speech: Where to Draw the Line.”

At the National Press Club, Public Agenda presented the fourth program, “On Second Thought: The Public’s View of the Issues.” Rather than a tabulation of opinions gathered, “On Second Thought” was a report of the considered judgments of forum participants.

The foundation expands its Urban Affairs program to include ways for individual citizens to take an effective part in shaping public policy.

1975

Listening for, and Finding, a Public Voice

Two new programs were also on the schedule. “What the Public Needs to Know: A Critical Issues Conference” was a discussion between members of Congress, congressional staff, and conference participants about important issues in our nation’s future. “New Ways to Listen to the Public” was a symposium that engaged national, state, and local policymakers in an exploration of better ways to listen to the public.

Looking ahead, National Forums ’89 planners built a similar program—a county fair, a reception in the Archives’

Kettering’s goal was to reach political and media leadership with a message about deliberative democracy and the public voice.

rotunda, a Public Agenda symposium, congressional visits, and a National Town Meeting on the subject of the condition of our democracy. Planners set several goals including this one: “To engage policymakers, the Executive Branch, and policy experts in a dialogue with citizens about their shared responsibilities in setting policy direction for the nation—so

that the public and elected leaders might better understand their respective roles.”

From the beginning, television had been a part of each program’s capstone event. In 1983, a satellite network hosted by NPR’s Linda Wertheimer brought forum participants from a score of communities across the country into the conference at the Ford Library. A year later C-SPAN broadcast a nationally distributed program from the LBJ Library.

The National Town Meeting, a one-hour television program taped at the National Press Club and broadcast on The

Learning Channel, was the focal event of National Forums ’89 and ’90. It was a forum-in-the-round involving members of Congress, policymakers, opinion leaders, and informed citizens in a discussion of representative democracy, how well it is working, and what were its problems.

In 1990, it was suggested, Kettering could build NIF’s influence in Washington, and its underlying vision of politics, through a widely distributed, annual report of

the forums not much different from the National Town Meetings.

To envision the celebration’s annual national town meeting as a program televised from coast to coast was an incremental step forward.

Kettering’s goal was to reach political and media leadership with a message about deliberative democracy and the

public voice. To attract congressional attention, the reasoning went, NIF had to be of interest to a significant public audience in congressional districts.

The best way to ensure congressional attention to a public voice, it was felt, was to have congressional participation in the video. The second best way, it was further felt, was to ensure that the discussion was widely seen by elected officials’ constituents.

Public Voice, Public Broadcasting

After reviewing several options, public television—considered to command a reasonable, national audience—was targeted. The foundation’s senior associate Bob Kingston was executive producer; Milton Hoffman, experienced in public affairs, public television programs, was the producer; and senior associate Diane Eisenberg handled distribution.

A Public Voice ’91, a one-hour public affairs television program was taped on April 15, 1991, at the National Press Club. It was the first time *A Public Voice* was used formally to describe forum outcomes. Bob Kingston was the moderator. Four members of Congress, four members of the press, and four members of the public joined him.

By September 5, 1991, 123 public television stations and 49 cable systems had broadcast the program and it was being distributed by community colleges to their local public access channels. The program continued to be produced in

May 1976

Dartmouth Conference X, held in the USSR, focuses on food supply. The Kettering Research Laboratory has been working on this topic for many years.

August 27, 1976

Kettering Foundation observes Charles F. Kettering’s 100th birthday.

1976

Listening for, and Finding, a Public Voice



much the same format as the first one from 1991 through 2007. At its peak, *A Public Voice* was broadcast by nearly 300 public television stations across the country every year.

The program was seen as the central thrust in the foundation's campaign to bring a new sense of politics to the consideration of the nation's political and media leadership. The video had a single purpose: to show that there is something we can call "a public voice" on complex and troubling policy matters. And this public voice is significantly different from the debate on these issues as it is recorded in the media and significantly different from the debate "as we hear it through the mouths of political leaders."

The issue of abortion is a good example. The issue is so polarized, some

argued, that it did not lend itself to public deliberation. An issue in 1991, it was part of the initial *A Public Voice* video program. Approaches were "Affirming Life: Moral Claims, Legal Sanctions"; "Abortion Rights: Personal Choices, Private Decisions"; and "Respecting Differences: Private Lives and the Public Interest."

Beyond the Usual Divide

The forums had revealed something vastly different from the contest between the pro-life and the pro-choice lobbies. There were agonizing public discussions about the almost intolerable question of abortion as a matter of public concern.

"As the discussions went on," it was noted, "people became less and less willing to establish any formal rule that would inhibit a woman's achieving abortion.

Yet, bit by bit, in virtually equal measure, the forums also revealed people growing increasingly concerned about the value of individual life."

Public deliberation, we learned, was possible even with the most divisive issues. Catholic churches, strongly opposed to abortion, took part in the forums.

In a significant research experiment, *A Public Voice* has recently invited policymakers to join in framing new issue guides. Researchers wanted to understand precisely what policymakers needed to know from the public. In 2015, the issue was the economy. On May 7, a panel of officials from local and state governments met in the morning session at the National Press Club. National policymakers met in the afternoon. Their themes and ideas will be used as part of the research base for writing the issue guide in a way that takes into account both what officials want to know from citizens as well as what people hold dear.

After forums are held throughout the country, feedback to policymakers will continue through Washington briefings, perhaps with some of the same local, state, and national policymakers who took part in *A Public Voice 2015*. This research experiment will continue to be tested in the coming years.

Bob Daley is a senior associate of the Kettering Foundation. He can be reached at daley@kettering.org.

December 1977
Robert Chollar visits
the People's Republic
of China.

..... 1977

Informing or Engaging:

What Is the Role of Higher Education in Strengthening Public Life?

Kettering's work in higher education has focused on engagement and engaged scholarship.

Derek W. M. Barker

Higher education is a key institution in our democracy, charged with shaping the next generation of our citizenry. From Kettering's perspective, future citizens need more than information if they are to be effective actors in public life. They need to be able to come together with other citizens—across partisan divides—and make a difference in their communities. However, a key challenge underlying Kettering's research is how higher education views its civic role. That is, as these institutions have evolved, rather than an *engaged* citizenry, they have in most cases narrowed their role to developing an *informed* citizenry. To address this challenge, over time Kettering has developed a small network of college campuses that are experimenting with deliberative approaches to civic education and public forms of scholarship that integrate the civic aspirations of academics into their professional work.

Kettering's research on higher education, of course, was part of the foundation's shift from technical innovation to democracy and citizenship. At the beginning of this shift, the foundation faced a critical puzzle. The dominant narrative was that the public was apathetic and uninterested in politics. Low rates of voter turnout and opinion data on attitudes toward government reinforced this view. There

Informing or Engaging

seemed to be no demand for the type of democracy that Kettering saw as increasingly necessary to address our nation's problems. A key insight helped shape Kettering's research agenda for the next 20 years: perhaps what appeared as apathy and disinterest was in fact a deep sense of frustration and alienation. While the public may be disgusted with politics-as-usual, perhaps citizens could be reenergized by a different kind of politics worthy of their time and attention. Indeed, researchers in Kettering's network found evidence for this hypothesis in a series of focus group reports of public attitudes toward politics. Following the landmark *Citizens and Politics: A View from Main Street America* study of the public-at-large published in 1991, the Harwood Institute found this phenomenon to be especially true of students in the 1993 study, *College Students Talk Politics*. While frustrated with politics-as-usual, college students were enthusiastic about working together in their communities and engaging in public discourse across partisan divides. As David Mathews wrote in his foreword to *College Students Talk Politics*, "This study found that students have retained a remarkable 'instinct' for democratic practice; there is a buried civic consciousness in students."

Sparked by the idea that people had a latent potential for civic awakening, Kettering began thinking about the possibilities for higher education to provide the sorts of experiences that students seemed to want. The foundation became aware of

the larger possibilities for higher education's civic role by looking historically at the major movements in higher education, from the liberal arts colleges of the founding era, to land-grant and minority-serving institutions founded after the Civil War, and community colleges in the 1950s. In "The Public and Its Colleges," an article that appeared in the 1998 issue of the *Higher Education Exchange*, Claire Snyder-Hall observed that, in each case, the colleges evolved in the context of larger civic movements. They were responding to particular groups, each demanding not only technical knowledge or vocational training but also education as full participants in our democracy. Although it seems strange to speak in this way now, at the most transformative moments in its history, higher education has been itself a civic movement.

Stirrings within the Academy

While Kettering was just beginning to focus its attention on higher education in the 1990s, within the academy interest in civic engagement was also beginning to take shape. A consensus emerged that universities seemed to have narrowed their vision and lost their way. Based on interviews with faculty at the University of Minnesota, Harry Boyte

observed a widespread disenchantment among academics with their disconnection from public life—even among academics who joined the profession with hopes of their ideas contributing to social change. Academics began talking

A key insight helped shape Kettering's research agenda for the next 20 years: perhaps what appeared as apathy and disinterest was in fact a deep sense of frustration and alienation. While the public may be disgusted with politics-as-usual, perhaps citizens could be reenergized by a different kind of politics worthy of their time and attention.

once again about civic education and their democratic role. In 1999, a "civic movement" was formally declared with a document now known as the Wingspread Declaration, in which a group of college presidents committed to an expansive

Kettering adds a new program of study called Exploratory Research.

Kettering Research Laboratory and the Botany Institute of the Academia Sinica in Peking collaborate on research in nitrogen fixation and photosynthesis.

1979

Informing or Engaging

vision of an informed and engaged citizenry. By the turn of the millennium, nearly every campus had courses and offices devoted to civic engagement.

Although something was stirring in higher education, from Kettering's point of view, what it actually meant for democracy had yet to be determined.

Kettering has developed its experiments based on a different, and, we believe, more complete concept of higher education and its civic mission. . . . This approach reflects a fundamentally different understanding of civic engagement.

Would this civic movement aim to educate students in their civic capacities, to participate in politics and public life, to negotiate conflict and work together across their differences? Or would it teach students to make a difference by using their knowledge as individuals through direct service? Arguably, both goals

represent coherent and complementary visions for higher education and its civic mission. Indeed, during the formation of the civic movement in higher education, both visions were part of the conversation. However, Kettering realized the civic engagement movement had become more focused on the application of expert

knowledge rather than the relational norms and habits needed to revamp our politics; in the categories of the philosopher Jürgen Habermas, it had prioritized instrumental reason over communicative rationality.

The civic education of college students, while much improved, has mostly emphasized individual community-service experiences. As Rick Battistoni, himself a proponent and practitioner of service learning, has argued in the 2014 issue of the *Higher Education Exchange*, such efforts are "a mile wide and an inch deep."

By emphasizing such programs, higher education sends students the signal that individual service is a more satisfying and direct way of making a difference than working through politics and public life. Students are taught to see communities as recipients of their expertise rather than ecosystems rich with their own civic assets. More than ever before,

students have opportunities to apply their knowledge in community contexts, but higher education seems to have reached its limit when it comes to educating their civic skills and capacities.

Similarly, academics in outreach and extension fields are talking about civic engagement more than ever before. However, what they mean by civic engagement remains unclear. Again, the dissemination of expert knowledge brings academics into communities and constitutes an important part of their civic mission. But might they also see a role for themselves in strengthening the civic capacities of communities? Reflecting on a series of research exchanges with cooperative extension and outreach professionals, David Mathews' *Ships Passing in the Night*? posited a fundamental disconnect between the role of the university in disseminating technical knowledge and communities' needs to come together to solve their own problems. Similarly, a recent study by Ted Alter, based on interviews at Penn State University, found that most faculty saw their civic role in terms of disseminating and applying their expert knowledge, while only a few saw themselves as strengthening civic life or addressing controversial issues.

A Different Civic Mission

In this context, Kettering has developed its experiments based on a different, and, we believe, more complete concept of higher education and its civic mission.

May 22-25, 1980

Dartmouth Plenary is held in Bellagio, Italy. Dartmouth becomes the sole American group willing to meet with Russians following their December 1979 military intervention in Afghanistan.

1980

Informing or Engaging

As Martín Carcasson and others have written, this approach reflects a fundamentally different understanding of civic engagement than what he calls “expert politics.” Rather than attempting to solve problems through the application of expert knowledge, Kettering focuses on “wicked” problems, ones rooted in irreconcilable value conflicts. The question for Kettering is how to develop the civic skills and habits to address these underlying conflicts.

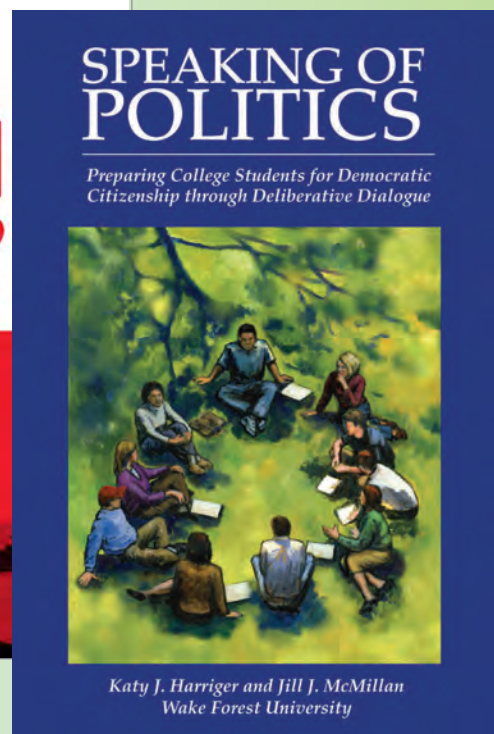
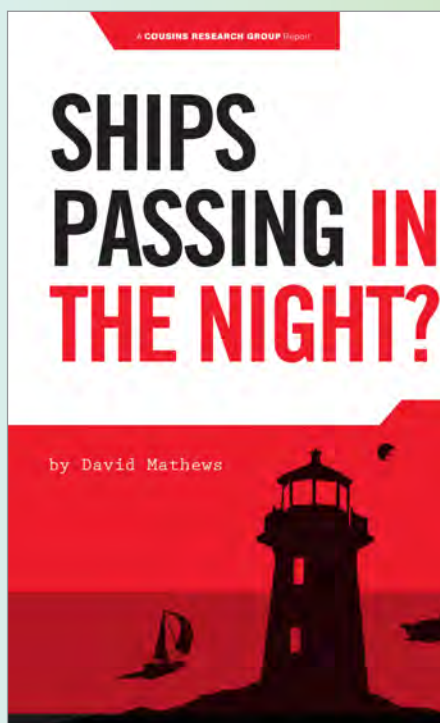
Building on Kettering’s research with the National Issues Forums, the foundation has worked with a small network of practitioners engaging students in dialogue and deliberation on controversial public issues. The effects of deliberation on students’ attitudes toward politics have been documented in the 2008 collaborative study with Wake Forest University, published in the book *Speaking of Politics*. Comparing a cohort exposed to dialogue and deliberation throughout a four-year curriculum with a control group, the study found the experimental group to have a more participatory understanding of citizenship, more sophisticated understanding of political issues, and a higher degree of political efficacy. A follow-up study with alumni of the Wake Forest program is underway to test the long-term effects of deliberation. Kettering has also observed similar effects in research exchanges with centers on college campuses around the country that provide institutional spaces for convening deliberative forums and with faculty who are incorporating delib-

erative practices into their pedagogies.

Similarly, Kettering has also developed collaborative experiments using community engagement approaches that involve students in recognizing and working with the civic assets of communities. Rather than serving an external community, the Living Democracy program at Auburn University, developed jointly with Kettering, places students in communities where

they live and work for the summer. Kettering is currently seeking to expand experimentation in this area.

Kettering has also developed research exchanges with outreach and extension scholars and faculty in applied fields to think critically about how they might reconceive how they are working as scholars in and with their communities. In the next year, Kettering plans to convene a new



February 1, 1981
David Mathews becomes the president of the foundation; Chollar remains as chair of the board.

The Domestic Policy Association (DPA) is formed following three meetings at the Wingspread Conference Center in Racine, Wisconsin.

November 7, 1981
Robert Chollar dies of cancer at age 67.

1981

Fish Pond

In the early years of the foundation, a small pond was located near the entrance to the nature trail. The pond could be viewed from the courtyard area, south of the Cousins House, and there was a wooden deck surrounded by a host of tall trees. People used this area for meditation, reading, or just relaxing. This area was blanketed with plant life of every size and shape. The pond had beautiful yellow and white water lilies and was home to Japanese koi and native frogs. One summer we even had a snapping turtle! The pond was indeed a great natural habitat for many species, drawing in many different kinds of animals including deer, red foxes, and blue herons. Wildlife and plant life continue to thrive on the grounds.



round of research exchanges with scholars who are thinking rigorously about what it might mean to have a role in the civic life of their communities.

How might higher education rekindle a larger vision of its civic and democratic mission? Kettering convened a meeting this summer of nine college presidents from a range of institutions to discuss this question. In the spirit of Snyder's historical research, the presidents noted that most of their institutions were formed not only for vocational purposes but also for the development of the next generation of civic leaders. The presidents agreed to work together and with Kettering to advocate for returning their institutions to the civic purposes for which they were created. They were concerned about higher education's role in addressing problems of social inequality, but sought to broaden conversations on this issue beyond the narrow focus on vocational education, to also include education in active democratic citizenship for working class and marginalized students.

If our goal is for the citizenry to be not merely informed, but also active and deliberative, what is the role of higher education? Reflecting upon 20 years of research on higher education, this is the question to which we have come.

Derek W. M. Barker is a program officer at the Kettering Foundation. He can be reached at barker@kettering.org.

Public opinion analyst Daniel Yankelovich joins the Kettering board.

The Domestic Policy Association publishes its first three issue books, *Retirement and Social Security*, *Inflation*, and *Jobs and Productivity*.

1982

Scholars and Scholarship with Ties to Communities

Through the years,
Whisenton Public Scholars
have probed ways to link the
academy with the public.

Ellen Knutson and Ileana Marin

The Whisenton Public Scholars program is a joint project between the Kettering Foundation and Joffre T. Whisenton and Associates. Participants have primarily included faculty and administrators from schools with a mission to serve minority communities (such as historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, and tribal colleges). Many of these institutions have maintained close ties to their communities and focus on developing student engagement. The two-year program encourages scholars to experiment with elements of citizen-centered democracy, such as naming and framing issues and making choices together in the context of teaching, research, and service. Additionally, the research exchange provides space for conducting novel research addressing the fundamental problems of democracy. Since 1998, when the program was created, more than 70 faculty and administrators have participated; the newest cohort met for the first time in July 2015.

The program was designed to investigate ways that faculty from various disciplines at schools closely tied to their communities could institute public scholarship practices. During the first year of the research exchange, participants come together to discuss topics related to public life and democratic self-governance, the role of higher education in democracy, and approaches to research in their communities. They also focus on learning to

February 9-10, 1983

The first Presidential Library Conference on the Public and Public Policy is held at the Gerald Ford Library.

The first issue of the *Kettering Review* is published.

1983

Scholars and Scholarship with Ties to Communities



name and frame issues for public deliberation, the ideas behind public scholarship, and the relationship between institutions of higher education and communities. In order to have a deeper understanding of the concepts introduced in the exchange, participants experiment with putting the ideas into practice through completing field work between face-to-face meetings. The second year of the program is directed by the research projects of the participants. Beginning with the 2010-2012 cohort, the scholars also joined other research exchanges conducted at the foundation that matched their research interest during this second year.

Four Research Areas

Over the course of the program, the scholars have produced research around the following broad areas:

- Developing curricular or cocurricular activities around public practices and citizenship;

- Framing an issue for public deliberation that is important to their campus, community, or professional groups;
- (Re)discovering the democratic foundations of higher education professions; and
- Articulating public scholarship as it relates to disciplinary concerns.

Many scholars have worked to include deliberative practices in their courses. They represent a variety of disciplines, from teacher education to international business education. For some, this meant including a forum as a pedagogical tool for students to learn about a relevant topic related to the course, while others revamped their complete curriculum to include deliberative elements throughout the course. In *Deliberation and the Work of Higher Education*, Cristina Alfaro (2000-2001 cohort) describes how she infused her teacher education courses with deliberation in her chapter, "Reinventing Teacher Education: The Role of Delibera-

tive Pedagogy in the K-6 Classroom."

Scholars have also worked with students and community members to name and frame issues for deliberation. Three examples of such framing efforts on campuses and in communities are from Nora Antoine (Sinte Gleska University), Xuan Santos (California State University San Marcos), and a trio of scholars from three campuses, Anna Green (Florida A&M University), Brian Anderson (Tougaloo College), and Kevin Rolle (South Carolina State University). Antoine (1998-2000 cohort) framed the issue of community development on the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota. Santos (2013-2015 cohort) is working with youth in his community to support them as they identify and frame issues that affect them. Green, Anderson, and Rolle (2005-2007 cohort) focused their issue guide on fraternities and sororities on HBCU campuses.

In many respects, most of this research addresses some part of the democratic

Scholars and Scholarship with Ties to Communities

roots of higher education, especially of the education of minority students. Beverly Wade Hogan, current president of Tougaloo College, and member of the first cohort of public scholars (1998-2000), articulates the democratic foundations of HBCUs in her 2004 *Connections* article, "The Role of Historically Black Colleges and Universities in Building Civic Responsibility."

The challenge of conducting public scholarship within a specific discipline is a concern addressed by several scholars. As an example, Barbara Nesin's (2002-2004 cohort) research helped to define the role of public scholarship within the arts. Her 2007 *Higher Education Exchange* article, "An Artist's Approach to Civic Engagement," describes how she combines deliberation and visual arts in her class on public art. Similarly, Nora Butler Byrd (2007-2009 cohort) explored the ways deliberation could inform the field of community psychology.

Centers for Public Life on Campus

In more recent years, several scholars have worked to develop centers for public life on their campuses. At the Atlanta University (AU) Center, which houses the campuses of Spelman College, Morehouse College, and Clark Atlanta University, a group of five scholars (2010-2012 and 2012-2014 cohorts) developed the Center for Public Life and Ethical Leadership. This center is formally housed in the Morehouse Leadership Center but serves

students on all three campuses. Through the center, the scholars host deliberative forums each semester and give students a rich experience engaging with issues important to their lives. Willie Rockward and Melvinia Turner King from Morehouse, Dorian Brown Crosby and Marionette Holmes from Spelman, and Charles Moses from Clark Atlanta have also framed their own issues for deliberation, including what responsibility an African American president has for the black community in the United States. This forum was held during president Barack Obama's reelection campaign. They have also held forums on school achievement in the African American community and economic issues facing college students today.

Daryl Lowe (2013-2015 cohort) is in an early stage of developing a center on his campus—Tennessee State University. Additionally, scholars in the newest cohort (2015-2017) have expressed interest in exploring the possibility of creating such centers. This developing network of centers on HBCU campuses is one outcome of the Whisenton Public Scholars program.

Alignment with Kettering

Beginning with the 2010-2012 cohort, we made a change in the program that more closely aligned the research the scholars were conducting with Kettering

Foundation research. This allowed for the work of the Whisenton Public Scholars to be more fully integrated with the foundation's research agenda. Additionally, it created conditions for the scholars—and Kettering program officers—to learn with a broader range of fellow travelers who

Many scholars have worked to include deliberative practices in their courses. They represent a variety of disciplines, from teacher education to international business education.

share the desire to strengthen democratic practices in their communities.

Alumni Research Conference

In recognition of Joffe T. Whisenton's 80th birthday and as a way of celebrating his lifelong commitment to higher education and public life, we convened a Whisenton Public Scholars Alumni Research Conference at the Kettering Foundation in Dayton, Ohio, in February 2015. The conference had broad participation across the seven classes of public scholars who had completed the program by that time.

..... 1985

The first Washington Week is held in Washington, DC.

December 17, 1985
The first Community Journalism meeting is held in Washington, DC.

Scholars and Scholarship with Ties to Communities

The conference consisted of four panels that were followed by roundtable discussions. The classroom is at the heart of the student experience of higher education, so our first panel focused on lessons learned from experiments in using deliberation in the classroom. Campus life is an equally important aspect of the student experience, and another locus where students are able to find and effectively use their voice on important issues. To that end, our second panel coalesced around experiments with democratic practices on the campus. If institutions are going to better align themselves with the work of citizens; they must look past the campus and work directly with the community members. Our third panel looked at what we are learning about the role of public scholarship in democratic community building. The fourth and final panel explored what we are learning from experiments to align community and institutional routines.

The whole of the conference also served as a way to take stock of the work of the Whisenton Public Scholars program. At the end of the two-day conference, participants shared thoughts regarding the impact that the program has had on their lives, both from a professional and a personal point of view. A few of the insights came from this reflective discussion as well as drawing from thoughts many scholars submitted before the conference. Participating in the program helped scholars have a greater under-

standing of the role faculty members can and should play in the community. Cynthia McLeod Kamasa-Quashie (2005-2007 cohort) illustrates this: "The importance of civic engagement in higher education has really changed my perspective of teaching by connecting theory to practice. Engagement impacts academic performance and leadership skills. Students tend to see the world differently and understand the importance and benefits of a democratic society and being an participant."

The importance of encouraging and elevating student voices in issues that affect them was also a strong theme. As an example, Dexter Samuels (2007-2009 cohort) mentioned the change he saw in his students who had not previously participated in deliberative dialogue activism, "As they began to plan the meeting with the community, you could see the transformation of minds. During the community meeting, the students expressed themselves in a manner which was not displayed in the classroom. As a result, the students understood the importance of an engaged community."

An additional theme that emerged from the conference is that knowing *with* the community is a shift in mind-set from knowing *without* the community and that the community is an untapped resource that schools do not always recognize. Mario Aguilar (2010-2012 cohort) reflects this sentiment when asked what compelling ideas he learned in the public scholars

program: "I learned how to engage my community (low-income, first-generation parents of high school students) in democratic dialogue, where their ideas and concerns would direct the information and services I offered."

Over the course of the program, we have learned that there can be a strong resonance between faculty and administrators who serve minority students and the research and learning of the Kettering Foundation. The full impact of the program is still emerging, especially because it is designed to introduce the habits and practices of public politics to individuals who, through their profession, will share it with others, both students and colleagues. This move from impacting the individual scholar to shaping the impact they have on others is well captured by the reflections of Beverly Wade Hogan: "It was a tremendous opportunity—one that affirmed my not-so-well-formed ideas and ideals about civic society. It helped to clarify and define how I as a citizen and as an educational leader could influence the thinking and actions of the next generation to become more responsible, productive citizens in their time and [become] the quality of leaders who will inspire a more engaged, caring nation."

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Former Mississippi governor William Winter joins the Kettering board.

Kettering purchases its current campus in Washington Township, including the home now known as the Cousins House.

1986

KF and Journalism: On Again! Off Again! On Again!

David Holwerk

It's easy to understand why the Kettering Foundation has long been interested in the role of journalism in democracy.

In the United States, the First Amendment to the Constitution explicitly protects the practice of journalism. The institutions of journalism—the newspapers, broadcast outlets, magazines, and more lately, websites—ceaselessly declare themselves to be serving the needs of citizens and of democracy. So do most professional journalists who work for these institutions. And behind all this lies a couple of centuries of thought and writing that make

the connection between a free press, an informed citizenry, and a properly functioning democracy.

But for anyone looking at the course of Kettering's relationship to journalism and journalists, the story is considerably less clear. It's a tale of enduring interest, all right, but also one of ups and downs that are not easily understood. I think the ups and down are worth some thought because they shed some light on both the foundation's journalism work and on the factors that may make institutions and professionals more open to questioning some of the assumptions that underlie their work.

For anyone writing about Kettering's interest in journalism and journalists, a couple of problems present themselves from the get-go. The first is that, properly speaking, Kettering doesn't have any particular interest in journalism and journalists. The foundation is interested, however, in ways that journalism does or does not contribute to the work of citizens and communities in self-rule. Things having to do with journalism itself—story form, the state of the news business—are of interest only as they affect the ability of citizens and communities to rule themselves.

The second problem is that there is a tendency to lump anything involving Kettering and journalists under the heading "public journalism." This is both inaccurate and unproductive.

It's inaccurate because public journalism was the name given to a specific movement among American journalists that lasted from roughly 1990 until 1999. Kettering's interest in the connection between journalism and democracy began before that and continues to the present day.

It's unproductive because journalists have one of two reactions when they hear the term *public journalism*. Either they are puzzled, because they have never heard it before and have no idea what it means. Or they have a strong negative reaction, based on bitter arguments between journalists that took place more than 20 years ago.

With all that said, here's my take on the ups and downs of Kettering's journalism research.

The first issue of *Connections* is published.

May 1987
Kettering moves into its new offices at 200 Commons Road.

1987

KF and Journalism: On Again! Off Again! On Again!

I would divide Kettering's work with journalists into four periods. The first began in late 1985, when the foundation invited journalists to a meeting in Washington to discuss their role in how communities learn and to attempt to identify what community journalism is and whether it actually exists.

The results of that discussion are unclear, but there was no question that journalists were beginning to explore the nature of the connections between their work and community life. One notable example came out of Columbus, Georgia, where the *Ledger-Enquirer*, under the leadership of editor Jack Swift, launched a news project on the town's future. When the local government failed to act on goals that the newspaper had elicited from citizens, Swift reached out to Kettering for advice on how to proceed. In response, senior associate Bob Kingston and program officer Carol Farquhar helped set up community forums. Later, Estus Smith, KF's vice president, spoke at a community barbecue.

In early 1989, Katherine "Kay" Fanning, the first female president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors and a great proponent of community journalism, became a Kettering board member. Later that year, New York University professor Jay Rosen wrote an article for the *Kettering Review*. By 1990, Rosen and Swift were traveling the country talking about the work in Columbus and elsewhere, a series of events that David Mathews called the "Jack and Jay Show." Somewhere along the way, the term *public journalism* began to



PHOTO BY LINDA BARLETT

Jay Rosen (left) and Buzz Merritt, the Project on Public Life and the Press

be commonly used (perhaps suggested by Katherine Fanning) to refer to such work.

The public journalism phase of Kettering's research had more than a few moving parts—significant publications, meetings both in Dayton and elsewhere—but it reached its peak from 1992 to 1993. First came the publication of the Winter 1992 issue of the *Kettering Review*, which was devoted solely to public journalism. That was followed in June 1993 by the first meetings of the Project on Public Life and the Press. This project—which was run by the American Press Institute, had support from the Knight Foundation, and was guided by Kettering—ran until 1997. It marked the high point of the public journalism movement. (I attended some early meetings, as well as Knight-Ridder

newspaper editors meetings, where folks connected to Kettering were in prominent evidence.) And through this period, Kettering continued to be active in a number of journalistic areas, notably including to help the Project on Public Life and the Press move toward an emphasis on making the ideas behind public journalism work.

But even though Kettering was engaged with journalists on many fronts—broadcast projects, coverage of presidential elections, the link between journalism and public deliberation, the role of journalism education in shaping journalists' ideas, the Katherine Fanning Fellowship, which has brought many journalists from other countries to Kettering—the record (and my own experience as a journalist during that period) makes it clear that interest was waning, both inside the foundation and

..... 1988

among journalists. And in fact, by 2000, it had almost disappeared.

(This account of the history of Kettering's interest in journalism and journalists relies heavily on two documents: an unpublished 2000 paper, "Public Journalism History," written by Daniel McCoy; and an unpublished timeline of the events it recounts, written by my Kettering colleague Libby Kingseed. Both of these documents are in the Kettering archives. I grovel in gratitude to both authors.)

I think two things account for the sudden emergence of the public journalism movement.

First, a new generation of leaders was moving into American newsrooms and journalism classrooms. Most of them had come of age in the 1960s and 1970s and were molded by the experiences of those tumultuous times. For many of them—most prominently Cole Campbell, Jay Rosen, and Buzz Merritt—notions of active citizens and ties to community were familiar ideas.

Second were economic trends. The year 1990 saw the beginning of a recession in the newspaper industry, marked by declining revenues and the first glimmering of the electronic publishing revolution. Newspaper companies responded with hiring freezes, layoffs, and other expense controls. At the same time, market research showed that citizens were losing confidence in news organizations and journalists. In those circumstances, even folks as notoriously averse to introspection as journalists begin to examine their assumptions about why they do what they do.

Mathews Conference Center

The Mathews Conference Center (MCC) is a 10,500 square foot state-of-the-art conference center. MCC provides up to eight meeting rooms that can be configured in different ways, including a large plenary-style room for up to 163 people. Built with attention to detail, the front exterior is finished with area limestone to reflect nearby historical buildings. The interior provides highly functional space designed with the foundation's research in mind. MCC was completed in the spring of 2007.



January 19, 1989

The DPA officially changes its name to the National Issues Forums Institute.

Katherine Fanning, a journalist and newspaper editor, joins the Kettering board.

1989

KF and Journalism: On Again! Off Again! On Again!

And several things account for public journalism's swift decline. Some were factors that affect any human endeavor but are not of interest here: personalities, competing ambitions, and battles for primacy of place in journalism's weird class system. (If you've worked in the business you know what I'm talking about. If you haven't, take it from me, you didn't miss anything.)

But other factors do have something to do with Kettering's interests. Chief among them, public confidence in journalists and journalism continued to decline. To those paying attention, this suggested that the public journalism efforts weren't bridging the gap between citizens and journalists. And in an environment where instant feedback is the norm, that message carried a lot of weight.

Meanwhile, newspaper industry revenues rose sharply between 1993 and 2000. So the incentive to rethink the relationship of journalism to citizens and communities receded, and with it the sorts of initiatives that Kettering was interested in studying.

I'll pick up the narrative of Kettering's work shortly, but let me pause here to make a point about the connection between the financial success of journalism and the interest in citizens and communities. It's commonplace to identify this connection as a sort of existential crisis. Journalists saw their livelihoods threatened, this storyline goes, and so they turned to connecting with citizens as a possible lifeboat.

That's true to some extent, but identifying (okay, I'll say it: *naming*) the incentive that way obscures something useful. Such circumstances—which occur periodically across the entire spectrum of institutional life—create moments when professionals are open to examining how their work connects (or doesn't) to citizens and communities. These are the moments when institutions and the professionals who work in them are most likely to experiment. These self-examinations and experiments, and what happens as a result of them, is what's important to Kettering, not whether the institution survives or dies.

But back to the narrative. There is no concise record of the foundation's journalism work from 2000 on. But I can speak from my own experience beginning in 2008, when I got involved with Kettering again, as part of a workshop involving the National Conference of Editorial Writers. Much of the focus was on new interactive media, and involved discussions of questions, such as whether these media are by nature democratic. (For the record: they are not. Egalitarian, yes. Democratic, no.) These discussions were interesting, if you're interested in gadgets and their effect on people and society. But what seemed to be missing were the experiments and innovations that, for better or worse, marked the public journalism days.

To my mind, that began to change in a 2010 research exchange with editorial writers. By that time, it was pretty clear that things were going to hell in the news business and that this time there would

be no business rebound to bail them out. A number of the folks in that meeting seemed eager to try some different things. They also seemed ready to reexamine questions, such as whether their ideas about what citizens do in democracy were accurate or what it meant to serve the needs of citizens.

Since then, life in Kettering's Journalism and Democracy internal working group has been increasingly busy and fruitful. Everywhere we look, we find journalists trying to figure out how to connect better with citizens and communities, or how to manage the difficult tensions that arise even in the best of such connections. Among journalism academics both here and abroad, we have found a deep wellspring of interest in questions related to democracy—not just theoretical questions, but practical ones related to the professional training of journalists. In both cases, a sense of existential crisis seems to have opened up the willingness to consider questions that just a few years ago were not on journalists' agenda.

How long this state of affairs will last, I wouldn't care to guess. Journalism itself, at least as we know it, could disappear, in which case Kettering would be left with nothing to examine. But as of this writing, the foundation's on-again, off-again engagement with journalism and journalists is definitely on.

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July 22-28, 1990

Dartmouth Plenary held in Leningrad, USSR. Dartmouth XVII is the last plenary until 2014.

1990



From Civil Society to Civil Investing, and Beyond

Since the 1990s, four enduring questions have framed Kettering's focus on philanthropy.

John Dedrick

Earlier this year, John Dedrick spoke with the foundation's working group focused on civic organizations about the origins and history of the civil investing research. This article is drawn from his remarks.

These remarks concern only one slice of Kettering Foundation's research with grantmaking foundations. It's the slice I know best—the work on civil philanthropy. Kettering has a rich history of work with grantmakers, which includes collaborations leading to the creation of the Communications Network in Philanthropy and Grantmakers in Education. Foundation researchers have regularly served on the boards of a variety of foundation associations. And a few alumni have taken executive positions at foundations.

I will highlight the basic chronology of the civil philanthropy work since 1989. It can perhaps be best summarized in terms of five time periods defined by larger events in the nation and the world. Each influenced the responses of organized philanthropy and shaped the emergent research on the practice and theory of citizen-centered politics.

The Rise of Civil Society and Conceptual Innovation (1989-1992)

The rise of civil society was dramatic. It occurred as democratic movements in Asia, South America, and Eastern Europe, led by citizen groups creating free spaces and generating public will, suddenly became visible to many in the United States. The Beijing Spring and the reunification of Germany in the fall of 1989 may have been among the most vivid symbols of the time, but there were many others.

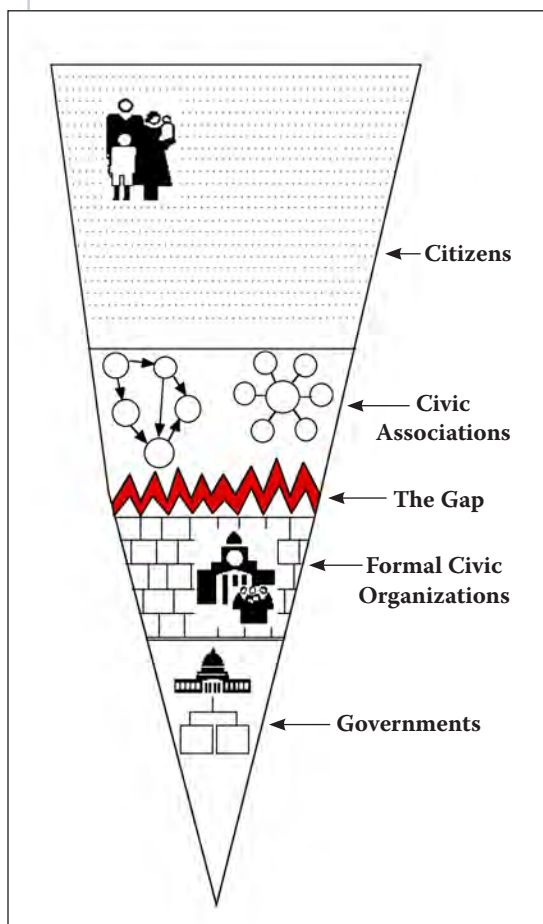
By the end of 1989, Kettering was ready to publish the first of three issues of the *Kettering Review* focused on exploring civil society and democracy around the world. The Dartmouth Conference, the Western Hemisphere Exchange, and ongoing dialogues with the Institute for American Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences provided context and materials for these volumes.

Civil society ideas provided a new set of lenses for many foundations. In the spring of 1991, *Foundation News & Commentary* published KF president David Mathews' essay "The Civil Opportunities of Foundations." Shortly after this, Robert Putnam's *Making Democracy Work*

The first A Public Voice is held in Washington, DC.

..... 1991





A chart from the civil investing seminar

attracted the attention of grantmakers by showing that civil society ideas had practical implications. He argued that social capital—the networks that promote norms of trust and reciprocity—can be generated through participation in civic groups over time. His follow-up research, resulting in *Bowling Alone*, made the worrisome argu-

ment that social capital is in decline in the United States.

The Executive Seminar (1993-1994)

In 1993, Council on Foundations' president Jim Joseph authorized the creation of a seminar on civil society for foundation executives. The Kettering Foundation collaborated with Robert Payton at the Center for Philanthropy at Indiana University to organize a series of three executive-level seminars on the subject. The first meeting was in Dayton, Ohio, October 1993.

Fresh thinking about civil society and social capital had set the stage, but by the time of the first meeting, an award-winning series in the *Philadelphia Enquirer*, titled "Warehouses of Wealth," had posed some hard questions about whether private philanthropy could be trusted to serve a public interest. (The William Aramony scandal at the United Way just three years earlier was still a fresh memory for many nonprofit leaders.)

By the conclusion of the third meeting in the fall of 1994, the executives had produced a distinctive framework for understanding civil society, a series of questions to guide grantmakers' further explorations, and a loose network of senior foundation leaders who wanted to continue to experiment with civil society ideas in their work.

The seminar had identified a challenge for grantmakers. They noted a disconnect between formally organized nonprofit organizations and a public realm that is populated by a variety of ad hoc groups and informal associations critical to the

health of communities and public life. But grantmakers who are organized to work with the formal nonprofits are often not well equipped to engage with informal ad hoc groups. What's more, in *Can Philanthropy Solve the Problems of Civil Society?*, Bruce Sievers of the Walter and Elise Haas Fund raised the concern that there may be a fundamental conflict between the instrumental bias of business and philanthropy, on one hand, and the value-based problems of civil society, on the other.

This challenge led participants to frame a series of four practical questions that continue to frame the civil philanthropy research:

How do we enter into community?
(And how do we exit?)

Whom do we work with?

What are we investing in—
Infrastructure? Processes?
Something else?

How are we accountable for this work?

Kettering initiated a new line of research on public attitudes toward philanthropy, especially with regard to accountability, as well as new research on civil societies, leading to the report *Can Public Life Be Regenerated?*

A final outcome of these meetings was an agreement that the seminar would continue as a "moveable feast." A core group including Marvin Cohen (Chicago Community Trust), Anna Faith Jones (Boston Foundation), Ruth Shack (Dade Community Foundation), Bruce

From Civil Society to Civil Investing, and Beyond

Sievers (Walter and Elise Haas Fund), Gayle Williams (Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation), Kirke Wilson (Rosenberg Foundation), and Kettering would take the lead designing these exchanges. Carol Farquhar served as the lead program officer for the civil philanthropy work at Kettering, and she continued in that role until she was appointed as executive director for Grantmakers in Aging in 1999.

Focus on Measureable Outcomes (1995-2001)

The Indiana Center for Philanthropy, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and Dade Community Foundation were among the seminar hosts. The group also met during Council on Foundations annual conferences, where there was considerable support for the work. By 1996, the ideas forwarded by the seminar began to attract wider attention among grantmakers: that year civil investing was the subject of a *Foundation News & Commentary* cover story as well as an op-ed piece in the *Chronicle of Philanthropy*.

But as Marvin Cohen, one of the thought leaders and champions for civil philanthropy, observed, philanthropy has a short attention span, and it can be fickle. Several things happened in the late 1990s that changed the context for advancing the civil philanthropy research. New donors and new money were coming into philanthropy. Much of it was directed toward strategic or venture philanthropy. This new focus placed greater emphasis

on measureable outcomes and greater focus on evaluation, which seminar participants argued can be a practical obstacle to doing civil philanthropy work.

Kettering's role was to undertake a series of research studies on both accountability and the role of governing boards to better understand the nature of the accountability problem and what might be done about it. Collaborations with the Harwood Institute resulted in *Strategies for Civil Investing, Squaring Realities, and Beyond Constituencies*, and later *The Organization-First Approach*.

Professor of public administration George Frederickson started a line of research exploring best practices and benchmarking. *Foundation News & Commentary* published his results under the title "First There's Theory, Then There's Practice." Frederickson also published with Kettering: *Easy Innovation and the Iron Cage: Best Practice, Benchmarking, Ranking, and the Management of Organizational Creativity*.

Throughout this period, we heard repeatedly that questions of accountability and evaluation were obstacles to grantmakers who understood that strengthening civil society and social capital entails, at least in part, making investments to strengthen public spaces, ad hoc associations, and democratic processes. But our efforts to introduce new research that might contribute to reframing accountability and fresh thinking about some of the pressures leading to a sharp focus on evaluation seemed to gain little traction.

Post-September 11, 2001

The bombing of the World Trade Center proved to be a decisive turning point for the seminar. By that time, the interest in meetings convened around annual meetings at the Council on Foundations had declined somewhat. After 9/11, the field entered a new phase of reconsidering priorities in what was clearly a new period in American society. David Mathews summed up the findings from the work done between 1993 and 2001 and why it mattered in this new era in "Trends in Philanthropy: Democracy as Homeland Security" in the *National Civic Review*.

In 2001, Enron declared bankruptcy. Foundations lost money, pension funds lost money, and many others lost money as well. Enron's failure led to a congressional investigation, the discovery of fraud and other criminal behavior, and the Sarbanes-Oxley Act. While the act's requirement did not apply directly to nonprofits, the Enron bankruptcy once again raised questions about accountability, which rippled through the nonprofit sector.

This was the context for Kettering's collaboration with Public Agenda and the Independent Sector on a focus group study to examine people's perceptions of the nonprofit sector titled, *The Charitable Impulse*.

Suzanne Morse Moomaw had been the director of programs at Kettering from 1983 to 1992 and joined the board of

July 1993

The first International Civil Society Workshop (ICSW) is held at Miami University.

October 1993

The first Civil Investing Seminar is held in Dayton.

..... 1993

From Civil Society to Civil Investing, and Beyond

directors in 2000. She left Kettering to found the Pew Partnership for Civic Change, a research organization focused on mid-sized American cities and the challenges and opportunities they face in strengthening capacity for local problem solving. In 2003, Kettering and the Pew Partnership agreed to convene a series of dialogues that would include both veterans of the civil investing seminars and members of the communities that had worked with the partnership.

These conversations underscored themes from the work of Kettering and the Pew Partnership with communities and helped to clarify and consolidate what had been learned about community resiliency from the civil investing work. Importantly, the dialogues with the Pew Partnership illustrated that strong democratic practice is a central and explicit theme in community problem solving. While the conversations did not transform practices of the philanthropic sector at the time, new approaches to grantmaking that focus on building community as well as rebuilding communities, particularly among public sector and local funders, have emerged. Scott London's *Investing in Public Life* provides an insightful analysis of dialogues.

After Hurricane Katrina and the Great Recession (2005-2015)

In late summer 2005, Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast. And once again, many in philanthropy asked: "What

are our priorities?" Three years later, in 2008, the bottom fell out of the US economy. In the period between these two events, resilience and community capacity became increasingly central themes for grantmakers. The Great Recession has had another effect as well, which was to resurface a set of questions about what philanthropy should be accountable for.

Kettering's response to these developments has been multipronged. On questions of philanthropy's role in community capacity, KF program officers Debi Witte and Derek Barker began convening meetings with community-based foundations, which led to a series of research collaborations with CFLeads, Philanthropy Northwest, and Grassroots Grantmakers. An occasional paper by Humboldt Area Foundation executive director Peter Pennekamp, *Philanthropy and the Regeneration of Community Democracy*, was one product from these exchanges. Kettering also worked with Public Agenda on research into accountability, reported in *Don't Count Us Out*. Work with Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement (PACE) resulted in *Philanthropy and the Limits of Accountability* as well as an article by PACE executive director Chris Gates and KF program officer Brad Rourke in the *Chronicle of Philanthropy*. And continuing the longstanding practice of working with foundation associations, KF program officer Carolyn Farrow-Garland joined the board of Grassroots Grantmakers, while I

was invited to join the PACE board.

Finally, former Kettering board member Daniel Kemmis, who was then serving on the board of Philanthropy Northwest, began organizing exchanges on a range of topics from philanthropy's role in strengthening community-focused nonprofits to enduring questions about the role of philanthropy in American democracy and its accountability to the public. One product of this work is Kemmis' working paper, *Philanthropy and the Renewal of Democracy: Is It Time to Step Up Our Game?*

Summary Findings

What have we learned from this work? Five top-line findings head the list:

- Civil investing is actually investing. It's philanthropic work that's aimed at building and strengthening democracy.
- Building a nonprofit infrastructure is not the same as creating civic capacity. These may be related, but they are not the same.
- Investing in the capacities of community to do public work is labor and time intensive. It's deeply relational and requires a long-term commitment.
- Communications and language are critical, and we don't have a common language or effective communication strategy for this work.
- Accountability matters, but it's about much more than metrics.

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The first issue of the *Higher Education Exchange* is published.

July 9-12, 1994
The first Public Policy Workshop is held at Miami University.

Politics for People is published by University of Illinois Press.

1994

Creative Acts as Democratic Work

Recent exchanges with arts organizations and artists have put Kettering in touch with a new set of networks.

Paloma Dallas and Melinda Gilmore

It started off with a question. In 2007, the *Higher Education Exchange* published an article by Barbara Nesin called “An Artist’s Approach to Civic Engagement.” As David Mathews worked on his concluding article for the same issue, he struggled with Nesin’s piece because of his “limited understanding of what goes on in the world of visual art.” Mathews asked, “If the public has to do more than observe—if it has to be a citizenry-at-work—then the question is, how does art affect people doing the work of citizens?”

His question got us thinking. Both of us have a background in artistic practice (Paloma in the visual arts, and Melinda as a singer and musician). The arts often raise consciousness about issues and identify or name public problems, but we thought they also do more, which made us want to explore Mathews’ question more deeply.

We both had a sense of the long history of socially and politically engaged art, and we had noticed a number of arts organizations describing themselves as promoting democracy or civic engagement. While Kettering had worked with artists or individuals who have used photography or film in their work, we had never taken a focused look at the role of the arts in community problem solving.

As we were listening to participants in Kettering research exchanges, we started to hear more about the arts than we had anticipated: a participant working in a rural community decided to use a play to discuss difficult health issues; a community organization has used an art installation as part of an effort to name and frame community issues; a playwright and community member wrote a humorous play about fracking to break through the polarization in her community.

We felt that the foundation was missing something that was happening everywhere—people using their artistic capacities, not as a replacement for the hard work of addressing their shared problems, but rather as an integral part of that work.

Creative Acts as Democratic Work

Kettering has long explored the role that civic organizations play in public life. We have found that one of the barriers to people having a stronger hand in shaping their collective future is the lack of civic organizations acting as vehicles for them to come together to address shared

could get our hands on about the role of the arts in community problem solving, and we started contacting others who were studying this work—and doing it on the ground. After a lot of literature reviews, e-mails, and phone calls, as well as many conversations with our col-

leagues, we felt ready to convene an exploratory research exchange. In November 2012, we held the very first Civic Capacity and the Arts exchange at our offices in Dayton, Ohio. We brought together a mixed group, some of whom identified as artists or worked with arts organizations in communities; others who had participated in previous Kettering exchanges and had used some sort of artistic practice in the work they were doing in their communities.

Arts in Everyday Life

While we had anticipated that such a diverse group might result in people talking past each other, that didn't turn out to be the case. In fact, many lamented the separation of the arts from daily life and its relegation to a sphere of entertainment primarily for elites. One participant talked about compartmentalization as the disease of our era. Kettering talks about professionalization or the plethora of professional silos and the compartmental-

ization of knowledge itself. This seems to have made it increasingly difficult to talk across difference—different perspectives, experiences, fields, disciplines; it both affects people's ability to come together to address shared problems, as well as limits the way institutions engage with other institutions and the professionals in them.

Some of the artists talked about the difficulty of being invited into communities as a “fixer,” when their interest—and the interest of some arts organizations—is really in creating opportunities for people to discover their own “fixes.” Others spoke about the problem of art being seen exclusively as the artifact or performance that is produced, rather than as a larger process for creating something together. There was the distinction made between monological and dialogical experiences, between artist-designed and civic-designed. We also talked about the challenge of creating authentic public spaces, which all communities need to thrive.

This exchange led to others, and after several years of research, we can say that yes, the arts can—and often do—play a critical role in the work of citizens. We've seen many illustrations. As 2015 comes to a close, we are preparing to share some reports that have grown out of an 18-month exchange with arts organizations scattered throughout the country. One paper, by Animating Democracy, considers “how artists, cultural organizations, and creative strategies can contrib-

We felt that the foundation was missing something that was happening everywhere—people using their artistic capacities, not as a replacement for the hard work of addressing their shared problems, but rather as an integral part of that work.

problems. Many civic organizations have instead become overly professionalized and focused on their internal programming and demonstrating results, rather than working in response to and *with* the community in which they are located. We thought it might be worth finding out whether arts organizations—and the arts more broadly—are responding to this challenge. And, if they are, how?

We started reading everything we

January 18-21, 1996
The National Issues Convention is held in Austin, Texas. Kettering is one of the cosponsors.

Public Deliberation '96 – Seven Presidential Libraries host forums leading up to the August Democratic and Republican conventions.

Is There a Public For Public Schools? is published.

“What does it take to make democracy work as it should?” becomes Kettering's primary research question.

1996

Creative Acts as Democratic Work

ute to civic participation as both an end and a means toward democratic renewal.” The paper draws on some 15 years of experience and research by the organization, which is a program of Americans for the Arts that fosters civic engagement through arts and culture. Other reports detail particular projects.

A few insights are currently coming into focus. Like any discipline, there are many arts organizations that have a more conventional notion of their role and their place in community life. They tend to look to communities as their audience and their funders. This is fine, and even good. But those with whom we have been working see a different role for themselves.

The arts have an ability to tap into other ways of knowing. As Esther Farmer wrote in her article “Strange Bedfellows: Community Development, Democracy, and Magic” in a 2015 issue of *Community Development*, “Traditional models of democratic debate have tended to privilege abstract, ‘disembodied’ forms of reason. . . . These kinds of disembodied environments that are overly intellectualized and abstract are dangerous on two fronts; they engender boredom, the enemy of enthusiasm, creativity, and imagination (i.e. magic), and even worse, these heady environments can also engender feelings of resentment and inadequacy.” Another participant, a professor of communication studies who has been collaborating with a visual artist,



Groups playing Sojourn Theatre's *BUILT*

speaks about his concern with the professionalization of dialogue and deliberative work. His collaborations with a visual artist are born of a desire to explore the full range of democratic participation.

Another ongoing theme has been the power of imagination. While an important democratic capacity is the ability to make sound collective decisions, another important capacity is to be able to imagine beyond one's experience. Many see this as a key role for the arts. For some, art creates a space for play and imagination, which can open up new options and possibilities to explore. At the same time, *art* can be a word that leaves some people out. It can feel exclusionary.

A powerful example of sparking imagination is a board game, *BUILT*, which was created by Sojourn Theatre, a company comprised of 15 artists scattered throughout the United States. The game is designed to stimulate community engagement through more productive conversations around urban planning. Players imagine the necessary physical structures of a place, as well as think about how we live together in it. All communities need a park and a library, but they also need places like a water treatment plant and a courthouse. How can we imagine an ideal community—and make it ideal for all? The idea is to encourage people to see cities (or perhaps all com-

May 22-23, 1997
First meeting of the
Whisenton Public
Scholars is held.

..... 1997

Creative Acts as Democratic Work

munities) as resulting from complex decision-making processes over time.

We're also learning about the role of the arts in stimulating public deliberation on public problems. In Flint, Michigan, Shop Floor Theatre Company was created to develop plays to encourage community deliberation on local problems, such as arson and the city being under emergency management. Since then, the company has gone on to create a documentary based on the experiences of international students in American universities, and they continue to use theater as a way to give voice to disparate experiences with a given issue and as a means for stimulating public conversations.

Building Democratic Muscles

Again and again, we've heard that the practice of working with others to literally create something together can help build up "democratic muscles." Making something together can create a sense of ownership as well as a sense of collective identity. As one participant said in a research exchange, "When I do things, they are embedded in me in a different way than when I am just talking in a head space."

The research has continued to evolve. Many foundations and municipal governments are funding "creative placemaking" initiatives that incorporate the arts in efforts to build vibrant communities. In

the summer of 2015, we held a research exchange with a group of people to look at the democratic potential in these creative placemaking efforts. The organizations we brought together are all trying to ensure that citizens in community drive the work.

As a new area of Kettering's research, it has generated enormous energy and expanded the networks with whom we exchange. As with all of our work, the questions we are asking overlap with other areas of research. For example, in Kettering's community politics research, cooperative extension agents began experimenting with the arts in naming and framing issues to encourage more members of the community to participate in solving public problems.

We've seen art affect the work of citizens in myriad ways; each discovery has opened up new questions. As we continue to move forward in this work, we've been thrilled to find experiments not only across the United States but also around the world. Insights about the role of the arts don't just come from artists and arts organizations but from other professionals and organizations. They are created in community themselves.

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SFTC STUDENT INTERN ZAINAB ALRADHI

Shop Floor Theatre Company working on its documentary, Immigrant U

July 1998

The first International Deliberative Democracy Workshop (DDW) is held in Washington, DC.

1998

1999

The Dartmouth Conference:

A Simple but Grand Idea with World Peace Hanging in the Balance

*Harold Saunders and
Philip Stewart*



*Daniel Yankelovich (left) and Georgy Arbatov,
Hanover, New Hampshire, 1984*

The Dartmouth Conference is the longest continuous bilateral dialogue between citizens of the Soviet Union, now Russia, and the United States. It has been an attempt to create a sustained dialogue on the changing nature of the relationship between the two countries for the purposes of preventing nuclear war and then strengthening the relationship between two powers that have much to contribute to world peace and development.

..... 2000

The Dartmouth Conference

The work began in May of 1959, when Norman Cousins went to Moscow with a simple but grand idea: to engage citizens from the two major nuclear powers in a conversation on how to prevent a nuclear war.

Cousins was the strongest proponent of the idea for a conference that would bring together high-level citizens from the two primary antagonists of the Cold War. And he had a personal relationship with the president of the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Cousins was a unique figure in the intellectual and public life of mid-20th century America. He was editor for 35 years of the *Saturday Review of Literature*, a founder of the anti-nuclear SANE movement, and a committed believer that world peace could only be achieved through world government. He was also a member of the Kettering Foundation board from 1967 to 1987.

Cousins went to Moscow in 1959 to meet with the Soviet Peace Committee to explain his idea for a citizens' conference. While Cousins' humor evoked laughs, his harsh criticism of many aspects of Soviet policy, particularly regarding nuclear testing and human rights, was met with coolness. Although promised a response, Cousins could not have left the meeting with much reason for hope. As this was to be the first meeting organized by the Soviet Peace Committee with Americans who were not pro-Soviet, the committee leadership was deeply skeptical that his



Dartmouth College President John Dickey (center) with Russian delegation, Hanover, New Hampshire, 1960

invitation would be accepted. Nevertheless, the request was routed through the Soviet Central Committee's International Department, to whom the Peace Committee reported.

In October 1959, the Peace Committee received approval to move ahead with this meeting. Alla Bobrysheva, Russian interpreter and Dartmouth Conference coordinator, is convinced that this decision was only possible through the personal intervention of Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev. Cousins' subsequent personal

meetings with Khrushchev, as well as a second meeting with the Peace Committee indicate the high level of Soviet interest this conference generated in Moscow.

As preparations advanced for the first conference meeting, which was to be held at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire, in the spring of 1960, the fundamental principles of this dialogue were negotiated. Many of these arose from Norman Cousins' deep insights into what it takes to enable effective human discourse, especially across deep

The Katherine W. Fanning
International Fellowship for
Journalism and Democracy is
created in her memory.

The Dartmouth Conference

divisions of hostility and suspicion. The first principle was that everyone would participate as a private citizen, not as a representative of a group or organization. The idea behind this was that private citizens would feel less constrained by official policy and more able to recognize and respond to fundamental human values. Both sides agreed that everyone would participate strictly in their personal, or private, capacity, irrespective of their high-level official positions.

The other principles were designed to develop an environment that would maximize the potential for developing relationships on a human level, thus making it possible to raise and confront the most difficult and contentious issues frankly and openly. Meetings were kept off the record to create a safe environment, free from publicity. Stretching the meetings over five or more days, with additional meetings before and after the main sessions, provided ample free time for informal conversations and getting to know each other.

Showing America at Its Best

Cousins showed some of his keenest insight in his selection of US participants. The question was how to create an image of the United States sufficiently powerful and persuasive to break through deeply embedded Soviet stereotypes of the “imperialist” West. Cousins’ answer was to involve persons whose careers and deepest beliefs embodied both the

diversity and the breadth of the American experience and character, such as African American opera singer Marian Anderson; playwright Russel Crouse; mathematician and president of Dartmouth College John Dickey; choreographer Agnes de Mille; former ambassador to the Soviet Union George Kennan, as well as various business leaders and former government officials and members of Congress.

For many participants, Dartmouth III, which was held at the Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts, October 21-27, 1962, was a crucible moment, as it demonstrated the value and role of the Dartmouth Conference. During the introductory dinner, President Kennedy was making his famous speech confirming that the Soviet Union was building missile sites capable of launching medium- and intermediate-range nuclear missiles at the United States and announcing an immediate blockade of all military shipments to Cuba. Should the meeting continue? Should the delegates immediately return home? What was the role of even well-connected private citizens in such a crisis? Each side pondered these questions, consulting with their respective governments for advice. As became clear only many years later, the Soviet delegation itself was deeply divided, with only a minority ready to continue the meeting. However, Soviet ambassador to the

United States Anatoly Dobrynin urged that the meeting should go on. The Soviets presented a united front and agreed to continue with the meeting if the Americans wished to do so. Norman Cousins perhaps best summed up the American perspective in his book, *The Improbable Triumvirate: John F. Kennedy, Pope John, and Nikita Khrushchev*:

The debate at Andover that week was strenuous, sometimes strident, but two things became clear as it spilled over into the second day. One was that the Cuban crisis didn’t interfere with the cordiality of the Russians or their desire to have a productive conference. The second was that both Russians and Americans, as private citizens, showed a clear desire to find a way out of the crisis.

The Dartmouth Conference is the longest continuous bilateral dialogue **between** citizens of the Soviet Union, now Russia, and the United States.

In a 1989 interview, longtime Soviet participant Yuri Zhukov observed that this “was undoubtedly the most dramatic and meaningful” of the Dartmouth con-

International Institute
for Sustained Dialogue
(IISD) is officially
incorporated.

July 2002
First joint Deliberative
Democracy Workshop and
Public Policy Workshop is
held in Dayton, Ohio.

2002

The Dartmouth Conference

ferences. "I think that in our meeting in Andover," he continued, "the way we dealt with the problems, were harbingers of the solution reached at the highest level later on." As Alla Bobrysheva pointed out in her book, *Thanks for the Memories*, Dartmouth

In 1965, the fourth Dartmouth Conference convened; however, after the US bombing of Hanoi, the Soviet side refused to meet for the next four years.

Kettering's Role Increases

In 1970, the Kettering Foundation was invited to assume lead responsibility for the Dartmouth Conference for the American side. As an operating, research organization, Kettering found two aspects of Dartmouth of particular interest. First, following its founder's interests in invention, Kettering recognized the Dartmouth Conference as a significant, original social innovation: a citizen effort to address the most fundamental issue of the time—prevention of nuclear war through building personal relationships and potentially greater mutual understanding across the boundaries of the Cold

War. Second, the Kettering Foundation found the principles on which Dartmouth was built fully consistent with its research interests in understanding and reporting how our public thinks about these issues,

especially when they have thought them through deliberately.

While never a negotiated criterion, the Soviets and Russians, within the context of their society, included people with analogous qualities and policy roles. These principles have guided the Dartmouth Conference in each of its 20 plenary and more than 130 small task force meetings of specialists during the succeeding 55 years since Dartmouth I. The task force meetings address issues from arms control to regional conflicts; from civil war in Tajikistan to the stalemated post-war situation around Nagorno-Karabakh in the Caucasus; from Afghanistan to Syria and ISIS; from Ukraine to Central Asia. Each of these issues is examined in terms of the challenges it raises for the US-Russia relationship itself.

Dartmouth is designed not only to reflect American public thinking to our Russian/Soviet partners, but also to share with the American public insights about the experiences, ideas, and thinking behind Russian policy and behavior gleaned from the dialogue. The Americans tend to see a two-way relationship—on the one hand, nearly all US participants accept as part of their responsibility to raise concerns prevalent among the US public. These ranged in Soviet times from Soviet treatment of prominent authors, such as Alexander Solzhenitsyn, to pressing for the emigration of Soviet Jews, as well as other human-rights issues; and today, from concerns about Russia's role

Following its founder's interests in invention, Kettering recognized the Dartmouth Conference as a significant, original social innovation: a citizen effort to address the most fundamental issue of the time—prevention of nuclear war through building personal relationships and potentially greater mutual understanding across the boundaries of the Cold War.

It demonstrated "the unanimity of the American and Soviet participants in the face of a crisis, which threatened not only both their countries but also the whole world."

2003

2004

The Dartmouth Conference



Harold Saunders (left) and Gennady Chufrin

in Ukraine to the murder of Russian activist Boris Nemtsov. At the same time, by including in the delegation prominent US writers and journalists, then and now, such as from the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *International Herald Tribune*, *CNN*, and the *Christian Science Monitor*, it was hoped that Americans would receive a more nuanced, less stereotyped, and more complex picture of Soviet reality and policy.

Many distinguished citizens have participated in the Dartmouth work over the years, but the contributions of three of them—two Americans and one Russian—have been especially crucial.

Phil Stewart's association with the Dartmouth Conference began in May 1972, as Kettering was preparing for Dartmouth VII, the first to be held under

the foundation's auspices. At that time, Stewart was an associate professor of political science and a Soviet specialist at The Ohio State University. After being interviewed by Robert Chollar, then president of Kettering, Stewart was hired as de facto executive secretary of the Dartmouth Conference. His responsibilities included helping recruit US participants, preparing agendas, writing background briefings on each agenda topic, keeping the record, authoring the joint conference reports, and preparing evaluations of each meeting, as well as debriefing with government officials from all relevant departments and agencies. Gradually, Stewart also became a full participant and member of the moderating teams. Since that time he has participated in 12 plenary sessions and approximately 80 task force meetings.

In 1982, Hal Saunders was appointed US co-moderator of the Task Force on Regional Conflicts with Evgeny Primakov. (Primakov later became foreign minister and then prime minister of Russia in the 1990s.) Saunders' experiences as a senior US diplomat in the Arab-Israeli peace process in the 1970s, ultimately as President Carter's assistant Secretary of State, were invaluable to the Dartmouth work.

As Saunders and Primakov brought together a core group of participants meeting after meeting, they learned four lessons:

1. They learned to talk analytically rather than polemically.

2. They learned it was possible to create a cumulative agenda. As Primakov said, "We will start the next meeting where this one ended."
3. They created a common body of knowledge—not just what the other side's position was but what its real interests were.
4. They learned that they were creating a powerful political process—not just a series of academic seminars—to transform relationships in a way that provided the foundation for a unique collaboration between two powers with global reach that previously had been dubbed "mortal enemies."

What Dartmouth Produces

The Dartmouth Conference produces three essential kinds of "products." First, it produces creative proposals to convey to our governments and larger societies that address specific issues in our relationship. Many of these proposals have found constructive resonance in the policy arenas on each side. The March 2015 dialogue at Dartmouth XIX, for example, persuaded the participants that the absence of high-level working groups in those areas where the United States and Russia share interests, such as Syria, ISIS, and the arms control arena, is having a negative effect on the United States' ability to address subjects clearly in our national interest, as well as the interests of our relationship with Russia.

The Dartmouth Conference



Dartmouth Conference participants, Dayton, Ohio, 2014

Second, and as important, the Dartmouth Conference, by engaging many of the same individuals over time, enables each side to understand the experiences, the processes, and the reasoning that ultimately shape policy on each side. Especially today, this kind of in-depth understanding is sorely needed. At Dartmouth XIX, for instance, influential elements in the Russian leadership made clear that they continue to see Russia as a part of the broader Euro-Atlantic community. Russia continues to seek security arrangements within the Euro-Atlantic world that will permit Russia and its region to determine their own political, economic, and cultural future and looks at the future in that context. However, Russia also has its own regional relationships, interests, culture, history, traditions, and values for which it demands respect. It will defend these and will reject efforts

by others to impose their models and values on Russia and its region.

Third, the diversity of backgrounds, experience, and outlooks represented in the Dartmouth delegations encourages the spread of insights into the “other” throughout our societies. Within a few days of the March 2015 conference, one American participant had been interviewed by CNN—one of a number of articles and blogs that appeared in other media.

As we reflect on Dartmouth XX, just held in October 2015, we are impressed with three aspects of this dialogue:

1. how much the relationships within and between delegations have evolved in a positive direction, even as the broader political context continues to worsen;
2. the enthusiasm with which the Russian side, as well as the US side, embraced the need to continue our dialogue; and

3. how the above confirms the one operational principle on which we are in full agreement—the value and necessity of continuing the dialogue.

The agenda at Dartmouth is cumulative, with issues raised but not fully explored at one session forming the basis for the next round. These include arms control, terrorism, regional issues, and opportunities for increased exchanges in fields like preventable diseases, journalism, religion, and others. Beyond these, at Dartmouth XX a central focus was deepening our exploration of how our Russian colleagues understand what they describe as “values” particular to Russia, how these values relate to their behavior toward neighbors, and how they impact their understanding of what it means in practical terms to be “part of the Euro-Atlantic economic, political, and security space” to which they claim to be committed. By pursuing this agenda with persistence, honesty, and integrity, the Dartmouth Conference will continue to play a vital role in enabling Russia and the United States, the only two powers with global reach and global commitments to collaborate more constructively to address critical global issues, from peace and security, to terrorism and development.

Harold Saunders is the director of international affairs at the Kettering Foundation. He was US assistant secretary of state from 1978 to 1981. He can be reached at saunders@kettering.org.

Philip Stewart is a senior associate of the Kettering Foundation. He was executive director of the Dartmouth Conference from 1972 to 1990. He can be reached at philstewart16@hotmail.com.

Mathews Conference
Center is opened.

2006

2007

Kettering and China:

Thirty Years and Counting

As two nations struggle to come to grips with each other, the foundation looks at what two peoples think of the relationship.

Maxine Thomas

In 2016, I will travel with a delegation including Kettering president David Mathews, David Lampton, and Kettering board member Hank Meijer to Beijing, China, to celebrate 30 years of dialogue between the Institute of American Studies in the Chinese



Robert Chollar and Professor Yang, 1977

Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) and the Kettering Foundation. This relationship builds on the very early normalizing efforts between China and the United States, which Kettering was involved in from the start.

The People's Republic of China was established under Mao Zedong in 1949. It was characterized by hostility toward the West and the outside world. US opinion of China was equally cool, with many Americans viewing China as a direct military threat. It would be another 20 years before the United States formally acknowledged an interest in connecting with China. In 1972, as a part of its international outreach, Kettering Foundation president Robert Chollar took a delegation to China just months after President Richard Nixon's official visit, which opened up relations between our two countries. From these humble beginnings, connections between

July 2008

The Public Policy Workshop is renamed the Deliberative Democracy Exchange (DDEX).

2008

Kettering and China: Thirty Years and Counting

Kettering and our Chinese colleagues have flourished. In 1985, Mathews and a small team went to Beijing to meet with several Chinese organizations and explore their mutual interest in establishing a dialogue among nongovernmental organizations to complement the work of the two governments. The purpose of these dialogues was to expand and deepen the interactions and understanding between the two societies. There were also concerns about Russia and foreign policy. This meeting began what has evolved into 30 years of collaboration.

All along, the two sides have struggled with the distinction between what our governments were doing and saying and what the public, on both sides, thought about the relationship.

Focus on the Public

As the foundation does in all its research, the work has focused on the public. At the first meeting in 1985, participants included David Lampton, now with the Johns Hopkins China Institute, Kettering vice president Rob Lehman, Kettering program officer Suzanne Morse Moomaw, Kettering vice president Phillips Ruopp,

and conference coordinator Patricia Coggins. This initial meeting resulted in citizen-to-citizen meetings held the following year in the United States. Over time, participants on the US side included leaders like Robert McNamara, Kenneth Lieberthal, William Taft IV, James Leach, Donald Oberdorfer, and former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger.

Early dialogue members from China included Li Shenzhi, head of the Institute of American Studies in the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences; Huan Xiang, head of the Center of International Strategic Studies of the State Council; and participants from the Beijing Institute of International Strategic Studies. It also included young scholars like Wang Jisi and Yuan Ming, who went on to have illustrious careers and now head the Institute of International and Strategic Studies at Peking University.

The central question for these dialogues was how to maintain a US-China relationship in the wake of China, Russia, and US-Russia challenges. All along, the two sides have struggled with the distinction between what our governments were doing and saying and what the public, on both sides, thought about the relationship. Over the years, Kettering networks held deliberative forums using National Issues Forums issue

guides on the public's views of China (*China-U.S. Relations: What Direction Should We Pursue?* and *China-U.S. Relations: How Should We Approach Human Rights?*), and Chinese colleagues began some innovative Chinese public opinion research (something not really done before in China). In 2001, we jointly published a volume in Chinese and English, *China-United States Sustained Dialogue, 1986-2001*, and a summary history of the dialogue. Along the way, we not only got to know more about each other but also were able to present deeper and more nuanced understandings of our countries, something the Chinese were particularly interested in. Each of our trips to China included visits to the US ambassador in Beijing, and Chinese colleagues also took the opportunity to meet with Chinese officials when they were in the United States.

The Impact of Events

But the dialogues have not been held in a vacuum. World events, particularly those involving one or both of our two countries, had an impact. Twists and turns affecting the relationship included the uprising in Tiananmen Square in 1989, the Hainan Island incident in April 2001, the September 11 attacks in 2001, and China's hosting of a UN summit on women's rights in 2015. Sometimes events caused us to delay or cancel a meeting, but the dialogue somehow continued.

In 2014, I led a small research update team to Beijing to meet with the new director of CASS. Over the years, there have been changes in leadership on

..... 2009

..... 2010

Kettering and China: Thirty Years and Counting



Participants in the US-China Task Force, 1986: (above) Zi Zhongyun, Madelyn McWhinney, David Mathews; (right) Li Shenzi, Suzanne Morse Moomaw, unidentified



the Chinese side. We met with Zheng Bingwen, who had just come on as director of the institute. He was somewhat familiar with the program, and he knew how long the dialogue had gone on, but we were not sure where this work would fit in his plans for the institute. The meeting was amazing! Zheng was delighted to take on the mantle of this work. He called this new phase of the work under his leadership “the second child” (with a nod to China’s move to encouraging families to have a second child). Our task, he said, was to make sure this work continued to thrive. As part of the dialogue, he gathered more than 30 professors who have come to Kettering as international

fellows. It was a profound, unique, and moving experience, for it is only with China that we have had 30 years of staff from one country participate as fellows. Nowhere else in the world do we have as many former international fellows.

At this meeting, I invited Zheng to participate in and present at Kettering’s Multinational Symposium in April 2015, and he gladly accepted. At the symposium, Zheng introduced the foundation to the research he has been doing on changing housing ownership in China. He also had an opportunity to meet over lunch with Mathews and Kettering staff, and plans were made to hold 30th anniversary celebrations for the dialogue in Beijing

in 2016. On his return to China, Zheng reached out to Wang Jisi and others who were involved along the way to join him in the celebration. Zhao Mei, one of the first international fellows, visited Kettering in August, and she and I continued to finalize details for this September celebration.

This month, we heard from Wang Jisi. No longer a new scholar, he indicated that he has retired from his former job as dean of international studies at Peking University and has just established a university-based think tank at Peking University, the Institute for International and Strategic Studies (IISS). His new institute will join CASS in the 30th celebrations.

In November, Lampton and I presented at an international conference hosted by CASS. We also met with CASS staff to develop common research and plan relevant publications, as well as move the 2016 plans further along.

This is a particularly exciting time for this work. Kettering hosted the 25th anniversary celebration, which resulted in a joint volume, *China-United States Sustained Dialogue: Celebrating 25 Years*, a best seller in China. While our goals for the 30th celebration may not be as extravagant, (although there will likely be a joint publication), this is an important milestone and proof that the work of citizens is both important and sustainable. We look forward to the work ahead and to continuing this important dialogue.

Maxine Thomas is vice president, secretary, and general counsel at the Kettering Foundation. She can be reached at thomas@kettering.org.

October 2010

50th anniversary celebration
of Dartmouth meeting
is held in Washington, DC.

2011



Kettering's Archives Hold a Quarter- Mile of History

Maura Casey

The windowless, basement room that houses the archives of the Kettering Foundation is out of the way for most of the foundation's visitors. But, in many ways, the records it holds serve as the silent sentinels of the organization. They tell a tale of where the foundation has been and hold clues as to the path ahead.

The room contains a little more than a quarter-mile of material nestled in towering, rolling shelves. There's an estimated 1,250 feet of paper files, 25 feet of photographs, and more than 100 feet

July 2012

Kettering expands its campus by purchasing the adjoining property, a home now known as the Trustee House.

..... 2012



Kettering's Archives Hold a Quarter-Mile of History

of audio-visual material. The foundation thrives on conversation and discussion, and the archives make certain that all those words, and the research supporting them, leave records behind.

I learned just how valuable a resource the archives are while reporting a story for the Kettering Foundation last year on Mobile County education reform. Some of that area's public schools are now among the best in Alabama, where once they languished among the worst. Despite top-down attempts to improve matters, change occurred slowly, through scores of kitchen-table conversations and deliberative forums. Yet reporting the story posed challenges, and the task of reporting fully events that took place decades ago seemed daunting.

Until, that is, foundation president David Mathews suggested I "poke around" in the foundation archives. I might find something interesting, he said.

Did I ever.

When I asked Kettering Foundation archivist Collette McDonough if the archives held anything relating to the Mobile County school reform, I expected a file or, perhaps two. She produced hundreds of records, some 30 years old, including newspaper articles, Mobile Chamber of Commerce financial statements, records of Mobile organizations' repeated campaigns to persuade voters to approve four referenda over more than a dozen years to raise education taxes, and even a copy of a 1987 condolence letter

from David Mathews to a Mobile resident involved in the schools campaign whose grandmother had died. The trivial and the fascinating were all here—a reporter's treasure trove.

McDonough wasn't surprised at the range, and neither was program officer and archivist Libby Kingseed, who also joined in this interview. The two are intimately familiar with the archives. The foundation hired Kingseed as a writer/researcher/archivist as a contractor in 2000. In the beginning she concentrated on the archives, which then was a room of filing cabinets whose records had little organization or identification. "I spent a lot of the first year reading," she said.

McDonough joined the foundation in 2005. Both have master's degrees. Kingseed's is in history with a certification in museum studies. McDonough, a certified archivist, has a master's degree in public history.

"The breadth of information that we have traces the research and follows various ideas relating to citizen roles involving community, government, and education and how to make citizen ideas visible," Kingseed said. "We do a lot of work by talking, but those conversations leave traces. This is the place that backs up the stories we tell."

McDonough agreed. "You can't know where you are going, unless you know where you have been," she said. "For example, if you want to do work in public education, it's always a good idea to see what we learned 20 years ago. As much as people like to think that in 20 years America has changed a whole lot [concerning education], well, it really hasn't. All you have to do is examine our NIF issue guides from the 1980s: the things they talked about we are still dealing with today. And if you don't save it, you won't have it in the future."

Are the archives in danger of getting filled? Not for awhile, said McDonough.

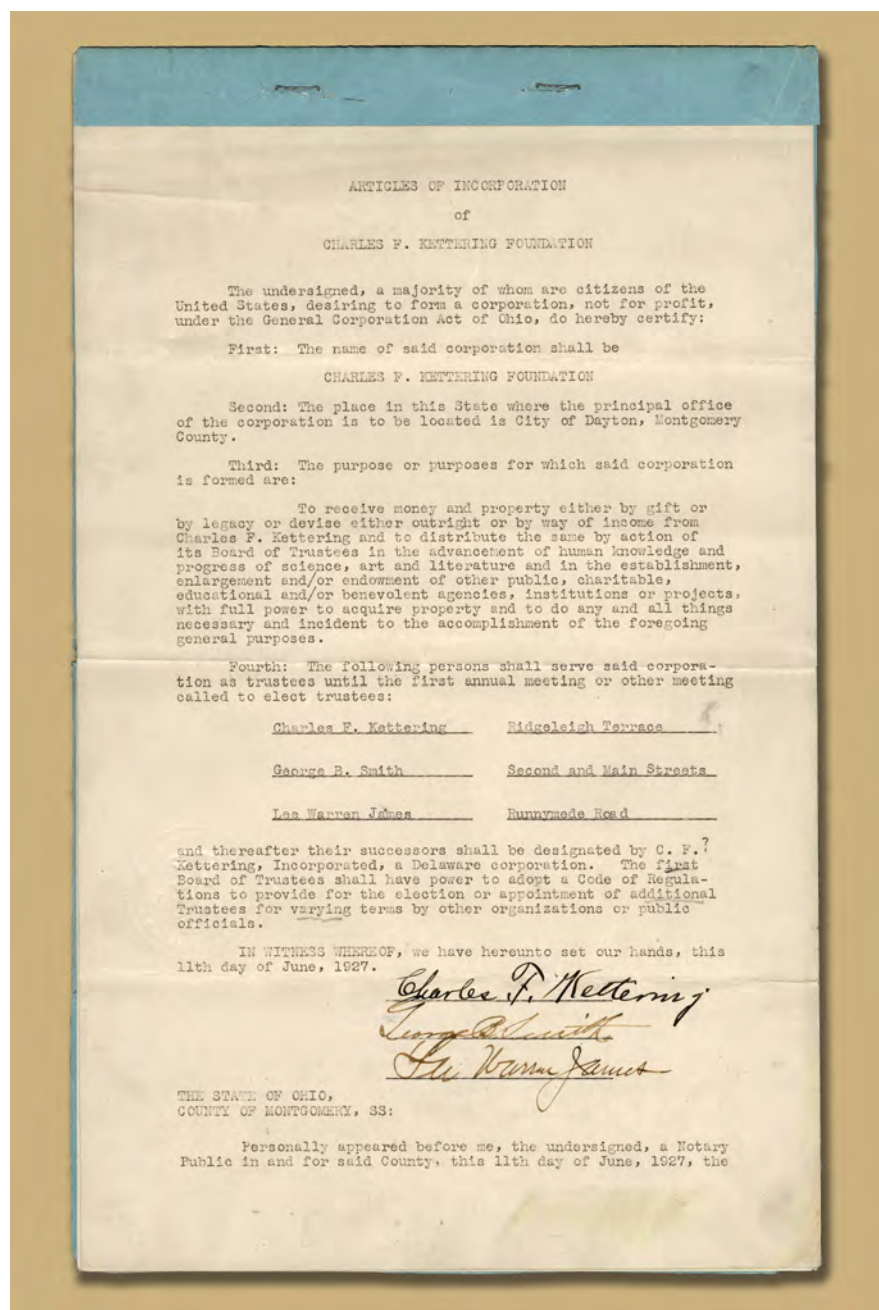
The foundation thrives on conversation and discussion, and the archives make certain that all those words, and the research supporting them, leave records behind.

The archives room is only about half-full. The foundation began to scan reports in 2010, but digitizing records won't necessarily mean more room, as the originals are retained. Publications, such

Common Ground for Action, an online deliberation tool, is launched.

..... 2013

Kettering's Archives Hold a Quarter-Mile of History



Kettering Foundation Articles of Incorporation, June 11, 1927

as the *Kettering Review*, *Higher Education Exchange*, and *Connections*, will be scanned and become .pdf copies, searchable through the foundation's computer network.

Changing technology, however, presents challenges of its own. McDonough keeps a floppy disk drive reader handy for accessing old files and will keep a DVD drive to read compact discs that are already being replaced by newer technology.

According to McDonough, materials related to Kettering's Citizens and Public Choice program area take up the most files in the archives, followed by materials related to public education and higher education. Kettering's archives are primarily organized by program area. Some materials are organized by a single foundation staff member, such as with the multinational/international program area. "Hal Saunders had it so well organized, I just kept all the files the way he had it," McDonough said. When staff members prepare for retirement, McDonough starts working with them months in advance of their final day to get their files organized for inclusion in the archives.

The oldest item in the collection is a copy of the 1927 document from the state of Ohio recognizing the Kettering Foundation as an organization. What's the most interesting item? Arguably, a photo from the first Dartmouth Conference in 1960. "Kettering's work is quiet, and in the background, but it helped end the Cold War," McDonough said.

The Ecology of Democracy is published.

November 3-5, 2014
Dartmouth Conference XVIII, the first plenary since 1990, is held in Dayton, Ohio, and in Washington, DC.

2014

Kettering's Archives Hold a Quarter-Mile of History

There are gaps, Kingseed said. Some pre-1987 material was sent to the Hoover Institution in California, but still intact are some of the first NIF surveys done in 1982, giving a snapshot of what concerned Americans decades ago. Although in general the archives aren't open to the public, McDonough helps people doing research, and there's an interest in making some material available to scholars.

"This is a check on memory. Sometimes it is a stimulus for memory," Kingseed said.

McDonough nodded. "Like [a research exchange week] participant list," she said.

How much attention to detail must an archivist possess?

"Attention to detail is a trait that archivists share with accountants, and people like [foundation vice president] John Dedrick, who never forgets anything," Kingseed laughed.

"Having a little bit of obsessive-compulsive disorder is not a bad thing," McDonough agreed.

So, do the archives hold any dark secrets?

The two were silent for a moment.

"There may be dark secrets, but for better or worse, we haven't found them yet," Kingseed said.

What happens in the archives, stays in the archives.

Maura Casey is a senior associate of the Kettering Foundation and a former editorial writer for the New York Times. She can be reached at caseyny@gmail.com.



Cherry Tree

Close to the Cousins House is a beautiful cherry tree. Longtime senior associate John Doble gave it to us in honor of the National Issues Forums 25th anniversary in 2006. According to John, he has been a part of the foundation's work in one way or another for most of his career. The tree blooms every spring and is a great reminder of the hard work so many in the network put forth in order to continue the work of citizens.





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